

Issue #48

UNDERSTANDING BEAT

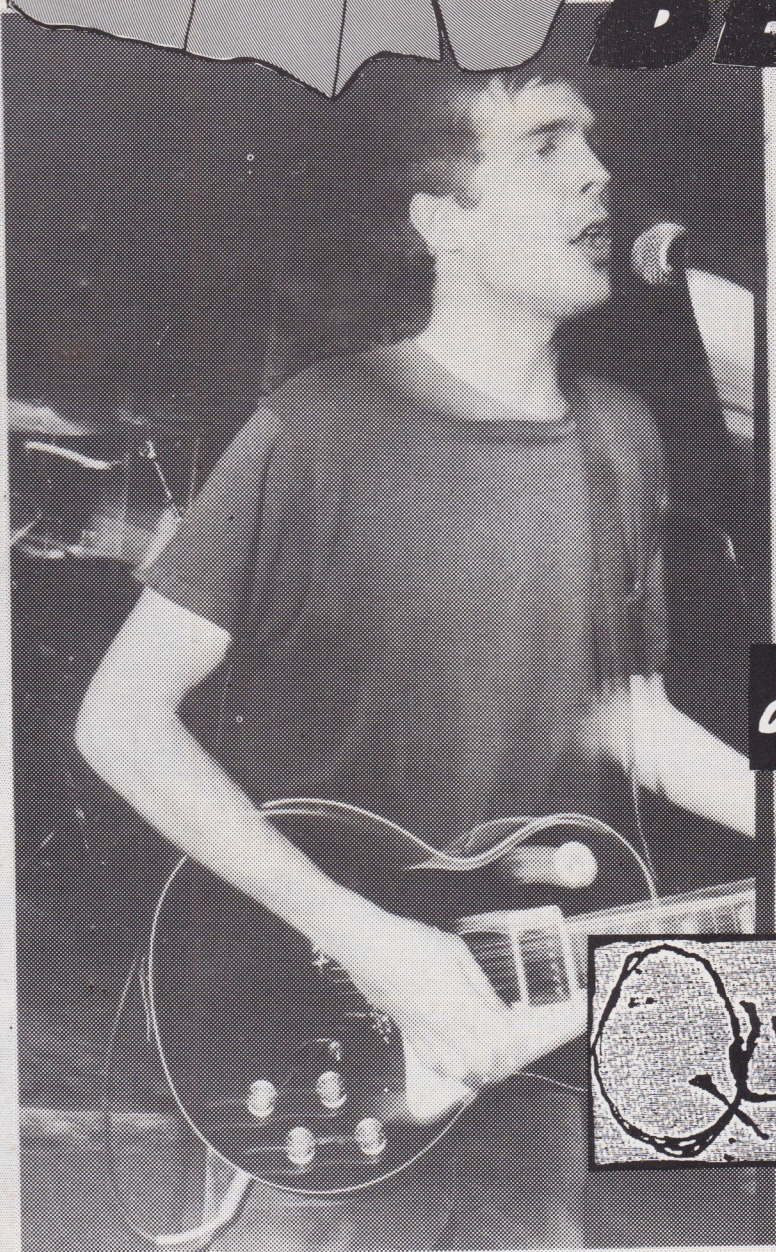
\$2

EMF

down by law

ween

Quicksand



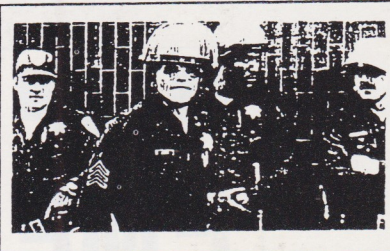
INTO THE BADLANDS



JERME SPEW

INTO THE
B A D
LANDS
4.00
SPEW
TAKES
YOU
DOWN A
HARD
ROAD IN
THIS 40
PAGE
CHAP-
BOOK
WRITTEN
DURING
THE END
OF '91.

by JERME SPEW



**THE COPS,
THOSE BAGPIPE
PLAYERS,
AND THE FUCKIN'
AC TRANSIT
DRIVERS!!**

THE COPS,
THOSE BAGPIPE
PLAYERS, AND
THE FUCKIN' AC
TRANSIT
DRIVERS!!
7.00
"CAUTION:
IN BETWEEN
THE ORANGE
COVERS OF
THE COPS IS
THE MIND OF
VERY ANGRY
YOUNG MAN
WHO WOULD
AS SOON
THROW
DOGS HIT IN
YOUR FACE
THAN LET YOU
TALK TO HIM."
- M R R
105

TO GET FURTHER INFO, GET ON THE MAILING LIST, OR
JUST FIND OUT WHERE THE NAPALM WILL HIT NEXT,
SEND TWO 29¢ STAMPS TO THE P.O. BOX OR CALL
THE INFO LINE. ALL THESE PRICES ARE POSTAGE
PAID WITHIN THE U.S.A.; CANADA PLEASE ADD ONE
DOLLAR; OVERSEAS ADD THREE/OTHERWISE IT GOES
THE SURFACE ROUTE, AND THAT TAKES MONTHS.
STAY ALERT, STAY ALIVE, REMEMBER TO FLOSS.

CIRCUS FREAK FUCKER!



by JERME SPEW

CIRCUS
FREAK
FUCKER
3.00
"I READ IT
COVER TO
COVER, IN
ONE
SITTING. A
VERY IN-
TENSE
BOOK, AL-
THOUGH I
COULD GIVE
HIM SOME
POINTERS."
ROBERT ALTON
HARRIS

TALES TO TELL AT CHURCH



STEVE MERRITT, JERME SPEW,
SPERRY, SKIP, ANNA JOY
SPRINGER, BOB GORDON, ADRIANNA
CREEL, DAVID McCORD, DOMINIQUE
LOWELL, BUCKY SINISTER.

TALES
TO TELL AT
CHURCH
7.00
"THESE STO-
RIES ARE ON
HIT. THEY SAY
THE STRAIGHT
DOPE. I READ
A STORY OUT
OF THIS BOOK
BEFORE
EVERY
DRIVE BY
HOMICIDE
OR CRIME. I
PERPETRATE."
- ONE OF
SPEW'S
NEIGHBOR'S
DOWN IN E.
OAKLAND.



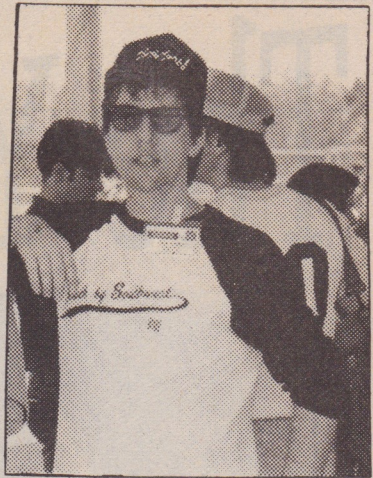
FEBRUARY 1993: SO INSANE

SYNTHETIC PRODUCTIONS
P.O. BOX 3506, OAKLAND CA 94609
NON-STOP INFO PHONE LINE: (707) 257.3910



Jersey Beat

Issue #48
Winter 1993



418 Gregory Ave
Weehawken NJ 07087
(201) 864-9054



Editor & Publisher

Jim Testa

Columnists

Hayley Greif

Mick Hale

Rodney Leighton

Matt Sonzala

Staff

Danny Aldridge Jr.

Tom Angelli

Wayne Brains - Art

Sal Cannestra

George Chen

Hayley Greif

Greg Leomporra - Photos

John Lisa

Mike Lupica

Greg Matherly

Kris Nicholson

Frank Phobia

Dave Sapp Jr.

Shawn Scallen - Photos

Jodi Shapiro

Matt Sonzala

Alex Swain

Michele Taylor - Photos

Jamie Turner

David Urbano

Ben Weasel

Mark Weiss



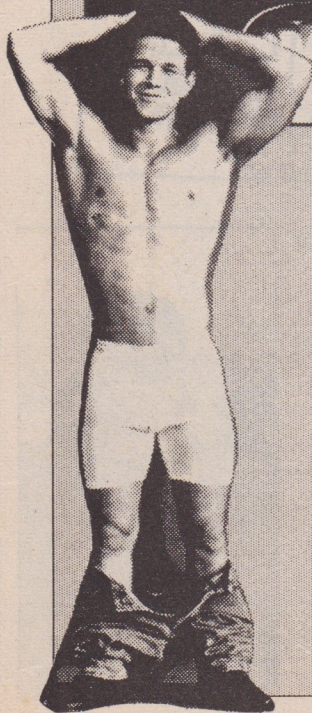
Reviewing Policy

We review records, discs, demo tapes, cassette-only releases, videos, fan-zines and books sent to us, and a few we buy ourselves. We do not review albums received on cassette format if the material is available on vinyl or CD.

Special note to publicists and labels: We gladly listen to advance cassettes but we do not review them. Material not received in its final form on disc or vinyl by presstime can not be reviewed. Album art and liner notes are just as much a part of the finished product as the music, and besides, advance cassettes always sound tinny and inferior to the CD. We know you're just doing your job when you call to "track" releases, but we really can't afford to return a lot of long-distance calls just to let you know that we got that tape you sent last week, so unless it's really important, just wait for the new issue because we do tearsheet everybody.



The Year In Music

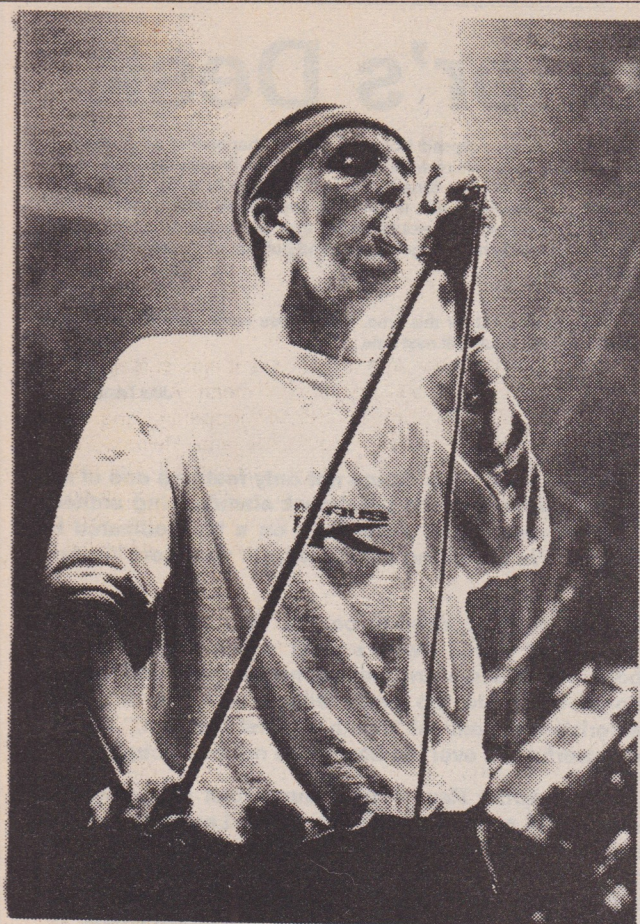


1992 was a weird year. In a lot of ways, it almost feels like it never happened, if you know what I mean. Almost everything that happened in '92 started happening the year before -- the Seattle grunge thing, Nirvana, Helmet, Pearl Jam, gangsta hardcore, Green Day, you name it. The major labels went nuts signing bands - shit, even Ween is on a major label now, and I'm not sure what that means, except that the term "major label band" sure doesn't imply what it used to.

Something else that's changed - and I don't think for the better - is this new spirit of exclusion that's cropping up in the punk scene. Part of it's the politically-correct thought police, who apparently feel that their elevated sense of morality overrules sticky little issues like the First Amendment. Carry that attitude just a little further, and you get vegans who don't want meat eaters listening to their bands or reading their fanzines, riot grrls who don't want guys at their all-female punk shows, and queer-core fanzines advocating genocide against breeders. Sheesh! Remember when the coolest thing about punk rock was that it was supposed to be so non-conformist? When it didn't matter what you wore or where you came from as long as you had the right spirit? Well, I guess it was never like that, except in the make-believe punk rock world of my imagination.

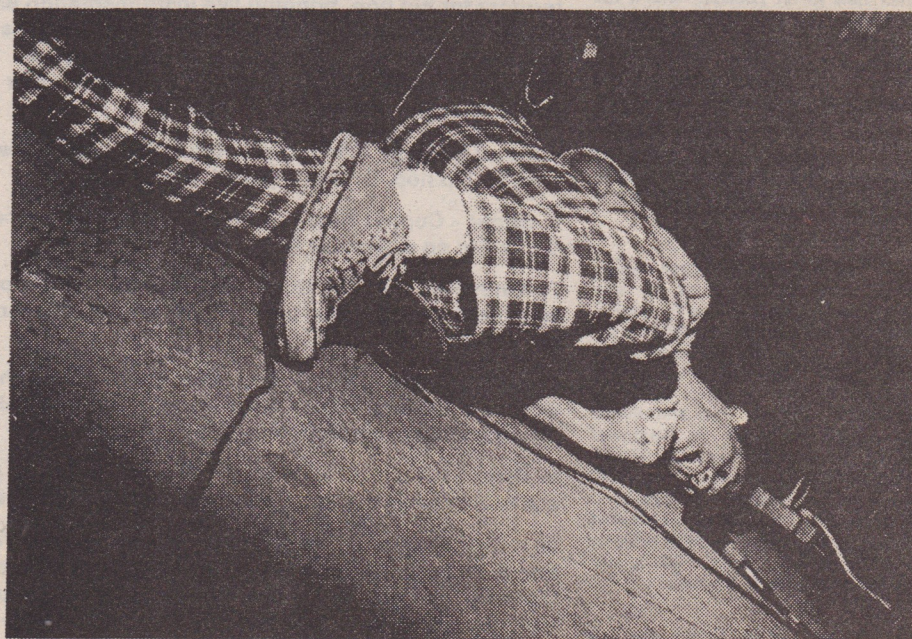
With so many half-baked club bands getting signed this past year, I also started noticing a whole new genre of band - for want of a better name, I think of them as the "we're getting signed" bands. It really doesn't matter what kind of music they play or what they look like, it's all in the attitude. These bands don't want any part of the indie rock underground. They don't want to tour in a van for weeks at a time or write a lot of songs and release a few records on an indie label. And you never seen them at a show unless their band is on the bill. I don't think these people even like music very much, it's just a career move for them, like taking the Civil Service test so you can work at the Post Office your whole life, or going to law school. The biggest villain here (well, the most important role model, anyway) has been the Spin Doctors, who didn't do anything but play a few bars on the Lower East Side for a year and now they've got a platinum record. Most of the "wanna be signed" bands wanna be the Spin Doctors; they've got that same unkempt, one toke over the line look about them somehow, they all dress like an unmade bed, and they all dance like...well, like white people trying to dance.

Pick your sex symbol: Marky Mark dropped his drawers in 1992, but Evan Dando got all the girls (and sold more records). Photo of Evan by Michele Taylor. Marky Mark courtesy of Calvin Klein



Techno got huge in '92, from the return of Nine Inch Nails to the alternative raves that started springing up (usually illegally) in warehouses across the country. Ecstasy was better than beer, and bands like Consolidated found a whole new generation ready to wake up and listen. Consolidated photo by Shawn Scallen

At ABC No Rio on New York's lower Lower East Side, bands like Born Against kept punk rock alive, even if Green Day chose not to show up—and the Old School NY/HC crew chose not to acknowledge this new scene's existence. Born Against photo by Shawn Scallen



Then of course there are the local bands who did get signed. Happy happy joy joy? I don't think so. Let's pretend you're the Sweet Lizard Illtet, ok? So you're the hottest shit in Hoboken since Frank Sinatra left town and every label in the world wants you, so you put aside any misgivings you might have about corporate rock, ignore just about everything your lyrics say you stand for, and sign with the biggest mother-fucking label there is, Warner Brothers. Then you sit around on your ass and wait a year until it gets released, and then when the disc finally does come out, absofuckinglutely nobody gives a shit. You sell two thousand copies in Hoboken and maybe two thousand copies in the rest of the country, and all of a sudden you've got this big advance hanging over your head like unpaid rent and when you re-read your contract, you find out the label isn't obligated to do another goddamn thing for you - no videos, no tour support, nothing. The local fans have gotten tired of your set, 'cos you haven't written enough new songs in the last two years to fill up an EP, and even the local press - which used to brag about how you were the next big thing - turns on you ("generic metal funk," it said in New York Press...) And since you never bothered to tour or build up any sort of fan support before you got signed, you can't go out and live on the road (like, say, All or Firehose or Superchunk or Soul Asylum or...you get the idea...). So you fire your management, who got you into this mess, and when that doesn't help, you fire your new management, and now it's even worse than before you were signed. Because back then, you were just unemployed, but now, you're unemployable... Yeah, it's a nightmare, and if it sounds like I'm being hard on my homeboys, I'm not. I like the Illtet, and let's face, their only crimes were being young and a little stupid, and maybe a little greedy. But that nightmare is waiting for at least half of all the other bands who can't wait to sign away their souls on the bottom line, and you gotta wonder why a few more of them don't rethink what they're doing. But then, what band ever made a record thinking nobody would like it?

From The Editor's Desk

Welcome back my friends, to the show that never ends. Or something to that effect. This is the place where I get to talk about what's been going on here at Jersey Beat HQ and get a few things off my chest.

For those of you who don't live in the greater NY area, I want to mention that it rained here from sometime just after Thanksgiving into well into the new year. Well, maybe it didn't rain every day, but it was dank, dreary, and overcast just about all the time. This did wonders for my sinuses; I think I had a cold for about four straight months. And on top of all that, my doctor informed me I have something called plantar fasciitis, which is tendonitis in both my feet. Which hurts. A lot. So I didn't get out a lot during the last few months, which is why there aren't a lot of live reviews. I'm getting orthotics which should help my feet, and my cold finally cleared up, so hopefully "Diary Of A Rock Critic" will be back next issue at its regular length.

Let me run down what's happening with some of the other people who work on this zine. If you read our last issue, you might remember the long interview with Letch Patrol and their plans for a big tour. They did go out on tour (although, in typical Letch Patrol fashion, only three of the five people in the interview actually made it out of New York.) As soon as the band got back, also in typical Letch Patrol fashion, it broke up. Chicken John is back to running Vital Vans, and Johnny Puke is working at a trendy clothing store in the East Village.

Screeching Weasel, interviewed last issue, has two new records coming out, neither of which was available for us to review for this issue: Wiggle, their new lp on Lookout, and a fun project on Selfless Records in which they re-do the entire first Ramones album, song by song. The band will be on tour in March, so keep an eye out for them in your town.

Sleeper went to Europe in November, and you can read all about that in Sal Cannestra's tour diary in this issue.

Mick Hale, our "Danse Assemblé" columnist, continues to spin techno at The Roxy in New Brunswick, and his band Crocodile Shop is still making demos and looking for a record deal. Anthrophobia, featuring reviewer Frank Phobia, is being courted by a major label and should be playing the South By Southwest Music Festival in Austin in March. Matt, our rap writer, has his own radio show in Houston and a silly side band called Penis. And one of our newest writers, Dave Urbano, is the bassist for Mr. Thumb, who should have a new EP out on Behemoth Records.

Speaking of Mr. Thumb, they are one of quite a few really good new bands in New Brunswick, NJ, which

has pretty much eclipsed Hoboken as THE happening scene here in the Garden State. We're working on a big New Brunswick scene report for next issue, so stay tuned. After all, this Seattle thing is just about played out and the media is going to need some other place to write about. Of course, that would mean that at least a couple of New Brunswick bands have to get signed and put out some real albums, but who knows?

That's about it for this time. Keep those cards and letters coming and enjoy the issue. Till next time...

- Jim Testa

1992 - Pick Of The Litter

1. Soul Asylum - Grave Dancers Union This album not only features one of my favorite singles and videos of the year in the breakneck slamdancing anthem "Somebody To Shove," but its melancholy reflections on a life dedicated to unrequited love (in this case, a love of making music) will stir your soul like few other releases this year.

2. Sonic Youth - Dirty In what was supposed to be The Year Of The Woman, Kim Gordon turned in seven of Sonic Youth's best songs ever - nasty, armor-piercing tunes about wife beaters and sexual harassment and casual sex. Hubby Thurston Moore didn't do too badly either, with the anthemic "100%" and the uncharacteristically political "Youth Against Fascism." One of SY's most consistent and powerful lp's ever, so how come nobody bought it?

3. Lemonheads - It's A Shame About Ray With punk rock economy and big-time melodicism, Evan Dando proved there's life in the Lemonheads yet. And while I liked all the songs (and loved the cover of "Mrs Robinson" that Atlantic tagged onto the lp later), the best thing about this disc is that it clocked in at 35 minutes, a fast improvement over all the half-baked bar bands releasing 75 minute CD's this year with 45 minutes of filler and sucky songs.

4. Arrested Development - Three Years, Five Months, and Two Days In The Life Of... Along with Das EFX, Arrested Development explored new uncharted territory for hip hop, bringing live instrumentation and a unique perspective on African-American history to their infectious grooves. Where too many gangsta rappers celebrated violence and misogyny as "black culture," Arrested Development offered a vision of family and unity that beautifully combined dance, theater, jazz, hip hop and soul.

5. Beastie Boys - Check Your Head One small step for punk rock, one giant leap for hip hop. Or was it the other way around?

6. Sugar - Copper Blue 1992 was a big year for comebacks -- Sugar marked the return on ex-Husker Du frontman Bob Mould.

7. Magnolias - Off The Hook Exuberant power-pop from one of Minneapolis' last great garage-rock bands, with all the infectious, skittish energy of the Buzzcocks.

8. Yo La Tengo - May I Sing With Thee Everything from fuzz-pedal guitar freakouts to teary-eyed Velvet Undergroundish ballads from Hoboken's most eclectic and accomplished combo.

9. Drive Like Jehu - Self-titled Frantic, frenetic, psychotic guitar spew that starts out slowly but takes over your brain before the disc grinds to an end.

10. Junk Monkeys - Bliss Four greasy mooks from Detroit who wear their hearts on their flannel sleeves and keep alive the spirit of Indie Rock '86, when Dinosaur and Husker Du and the Replacements didn't know from major labels and you didn't have to apologize for getting off on catchy three-chord punk tunes.

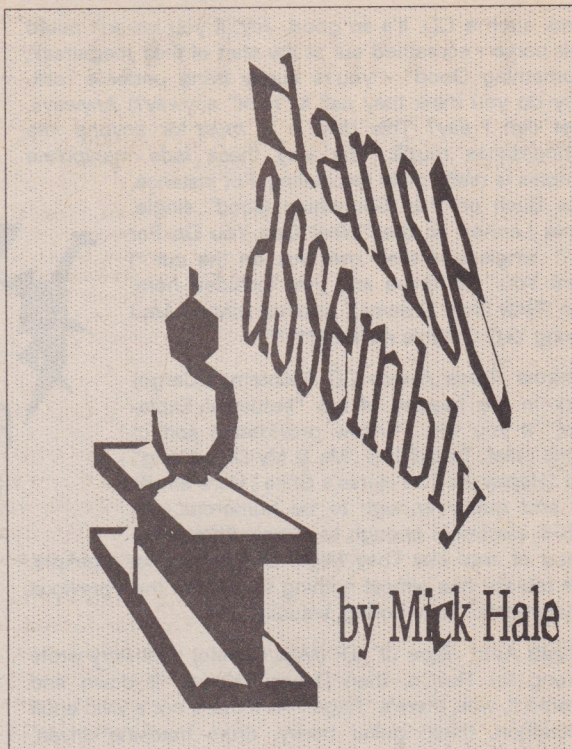
The general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached, continued to serve as the leading thread in my studies, may be briefly summed up as follows:

Diatrobe *Nothing* CD (ReConstriction/Cargo) This San Jose outfit, who up until now could be found lurking about on a couple of Californian comps, bring forth their fine debut CD. Two tracks co-produced by Skinny Puppy's Orge, plus two self-produced efforts. "Nothing" is by far a much better outing than either said compilation inclusion. Three of the cuts highlight the boys' montage of metal-ish GEEtars, melodic raspy vocals, an occasional hippity-hop drum sample, and incidently buried sequenced keys. An interesting collision between electronics and the more "traditional" rock structure. ***

Nine Inch Nails *Broken* CD (TVT/Interscope) *WHAT* an incredible waste! Even this guy's lp (which sounded like "INXS try industrial" in case you didn't notice) was better (sic).

Orbital *Halcyon* CDSingle (FFrr) Circling in from the UK comes Orbital's remake of Opus 3's "It's A Fine Day," under the guise of "Halcyon." Weird, this. Like it truly could be the "trance" remix, although the bit where Opus' distinct vox sample cuts out is also quite brill. "Naked..." is more of a tribal, Psychick Warriors-like groove, while "Sunday" adds a Lil Louis feel to this whole affair. Also included here is "Chime," their earlier single, which we found most enjoyable again. Excellent programming and beats on this one, kids! ****

Radioactive Goldfish *Rhythm & Rave* LP (Majii Cheetah) A double lp set, this. Split into a "Rhythm" and a "Rave" disc, hence the title, I suppose. First slab's a slower, more "industrial" sounding collecting, with humorous samples and some decent programs, while the "Rave" side's a

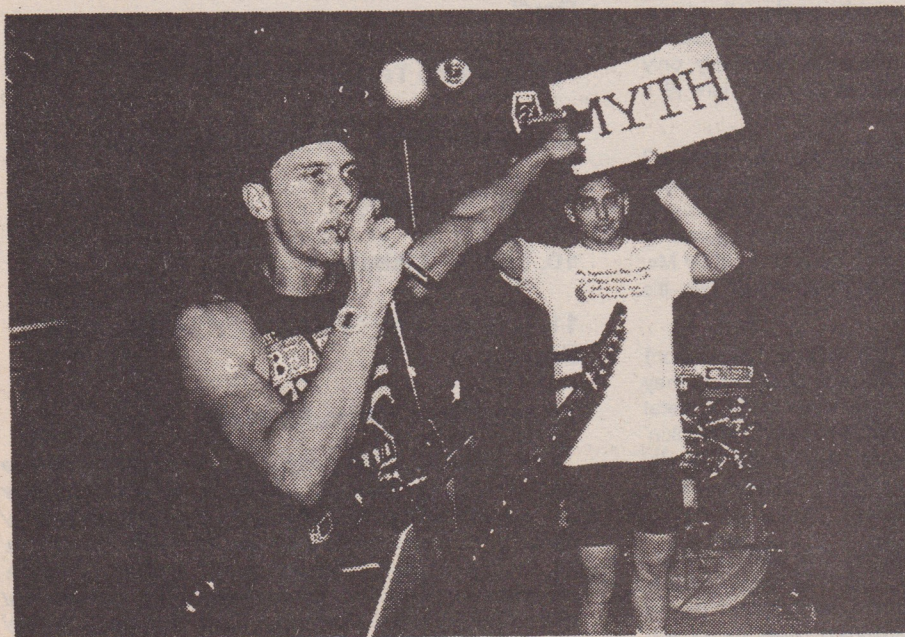


more uptempo event that's trance-y and driving, with plenty of that Rob Bass/James Brown "Whooo...Yeh!" sample. Old school "cheezy" production rules here, on excellent multi-colored vinyl. ***1/2

Consolidated *Play More Music* CD (Netwerk/IRS) If the title of this full-length is meant to be ironic, Adam & Co.

are showing their newfound sense of humor, yet if it's not (meant to be ironic, that is), Consolidated've *completely* lost it! Although the 4 and 5 actual songs (outta 27 tracks) R good, the concert bits seem to be the "showcase" of this collection, with a couple of piss-take tracks in the way of musical accomplishment. The Meat Beat re-mixed single, "Tool & Die," featuring raps against NRA lobbyists, street thugs, and guns over an ever-present wall-o-bass is definitely *the* high point. ***1/2

Utah Saints *Utah Saints* CD (London/Polygram) Such a



CONSOLIDATED

Photo By Shawn Scallen

band, such a CD. It's so good. Joy. If you haven't heard their name - screamed out at the start of their megatrack, "Something Good" - you're surely living under a rock. (why do you think they call it "rock" anyway?) Anyways, what can I say? This disc is a *must* for anyone into techno/danse muzik. The way these lads manipulate samples is really quite fascinating. For instance, Kate Bush on the "Something Good" single, Annie Lennox on the "What Can You Do For Me?" single and their own vox on the cut "I Want You." All these are, yes, included here, plus "New Gold Dreams," another winner. Am I Raving Yet? Get this *NOW!!!******

Pankow *Treue Hands* CD (Contempo/Cargo) Back in the heyday of the "Industrial Explosion," if you will, Pankow provided a sort of comic relief. Tracks like "Me & My Ding Dong" and "Happy As The Horse's Shite" were amusing and quirky enough to be humorous, yet tech & electronic enough to remain light years ahead of crap like They Might Be Morons, for example. This release has almost nothing to do with their previous amusements. Quite boring, actually. *1/2

Schnitt Acht *Rage* 12" EP (Majji/Cheeta) If Ministry wrote a song for RevCo, then Dessau slowed it down and covered it, well, there's "Rage." As if that's not a vivid enuff description, think: guitar heavy, drum machine driven, chug wit metal leanings. Geeze, this whole single sounds too slow. "Random Funk" (the b side) recalls NIN wit its pseudo-hip-hoppy beats and "climbing" keyboard riffs. **1/2

Leather Strip *Penetrate The Satanic Citizen* CD (ReConstriction) Here's one we've all been waiting for... L Strip's Greatest Hits! This German electronic outfit delivers 15 tracks of Aggro-Tech from the mynde of Claus Larson. Lotsa 242-esque programs mit slightly harder-edged vox. ReConstriction (via Cargo) has made it easy for alla us cheap bastards, as all these cuts were previously only available as pricey imports thru Zoth Omog. There IS a God! ***1/2

Moodswings *Moodfood* CD (Arista) What is this, anyway? "NewAge" for the Hip Hop generation? Laid back, mellow, "chill out" muzak for the post-techno chaos come down, here. Includes the single "Spiritual High" that's currently making the alternative club rounds, due to a vocal by Ms. Chrissy Hynde, and its lethargic Manchester-y groove. It's all so Hippy-chic. **1/2

Contagion *Contaminant PCB* CD (World Domination) These cats used to be the CA Biohazard, back before they incorporated the NY/HC band of the same name's metal leanings into their electronic sound. Seriously, I'm thinkin' HELMET with sequencers here, folks. Well, maybe. Mostly in their vocal chants, that metal thang abounds. Great production & samples throughout, tho. ***

Non-Aggression Pact *Gesticulate* CD (GPC Prods.) Overall, NAP's first one here (on CD) is a mighty worthwhile listen. This PA duo (1) comine sum heavy industro soundz wit enough danse/rap beats to get yer head and feet goin' and (2) a vox growl here & a techno riff there never hurt either. In fact, NAP's sound is so

unique, they cover Book Of Love's "Boy" and you believe it's an original. There is, however, an over-emphasis on certain "racial" samples, although the most racist of them usually gets a rebuttal (one of which being LL Cool J's "I Don't Think So.") I guess it all adds to the "tense" sound of this outing. ****



THE DANSE ASSEMBLY TOP 12
(Thur & Fri @ The Roxy, New Brunswick)

1. Utah Saints "Something Good"
2. Consolidated "Tool & Die"
3. Frontline Assembly "Blade" remix
4. Moby "Next Is The E"
5. 808 State w/UB40 "One In Ten" remix
6. Opus III "Talk To Wind" remix/"Fine Day"
7. Turntable Terror "King Of Rock"
8. Beastie Boys "So What'cha Want?"
9. T99 "CatWalk"
10. Liflike "Likelife"
11. Info Society "Peace..."/"Made To Be Broken"
12. Ish "Never Wonder Why"

That's all, folks... Don't forget, you can catch "Danse Assembly" every Thursday and Friday night at The Roxy in New Brunswick, NJ as I spin the heppiest techno/industrial & alternative danse tracks from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. (3 a.m. on Friday). See you there. Industrial, techno, danse, and electronic muzik from anywhere may be sent to us directly (LP or CD only, can't use cassettes in a club) and note the NEW address: Mick Hale, 126 Montgomery St #3F, Highland Pk NJ 08904Ta!

by Mad Matt Sonzala

Hip Hop's universal. It's practically the only genre that attracts heads from all across the spectrum, and I love that aspect of it. It gets confusin' though. Nowadays, more & more white kids are feeling the vibe, more & more

worships the ground Everlast walks on. Why is that?

The *House Of Pain* lp is not all that. "Jump Around" is slammin' and the rest of the album is competent; in fact, yo it's above board in a lot of ways. But come on now. Why do three white

guys deserve full pages in EVERY magazine (including a lot of underground zines? I guess three crackers aren't quite as intimidating as, say, Kool G. Rap maybe...) any-more than, say, Das EFX? How about a story on Black Sheep? Gang Starr? Man, it's not their fault they're so large; in fact, much respect to House Of Pain. But yo, get off they dicks.

Speaking of House Of Pain, you may have caught this next

kid on their track "House & The Rising Son" and on Cypress Hill's "Stoned Is The Way Of The Walk." *Funk Doobiest* got a 12" on Immortal Records that is all that and a phat ass BLUNT. Kinda makes your day alright. In the same

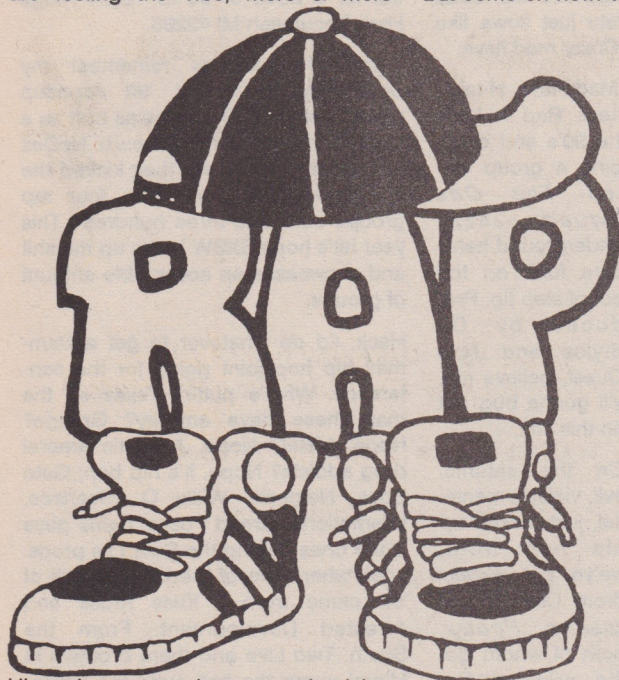
vein as the Cypress and House tribe, the Doobie Pirate comes off like a class clown on crack, with jabs at Handyman, shouts to Perry Como, says he rocks like Nirvana, put it this way, this Puerto Rican is the funkiest. Mad lyrics.

special where the *Black Sheep* was rappin' in every scene about Kadeem Hardison, cuz he was illiterate and going back to high school at 25? That shit was maaaadddd. You want the most bugged to infinite degrees lyrics ever? Check "On The Wall" from the *Trespass* soundtrack. Peace ta Q Bert.

Rowdy Records, a new division of Arista, just dropped two phat new 12"s. *Da King & I*, two heads with mad flavor, real basic just straight up shit, and *Y'All So Stupid's* "85 South" 12" ain't nothing to sleep on neither. These four brothers hail from Georgia, a place rapidly becoming the 3rd largest hip hop market, and why not? Arrested Development, Kriss Kross (um...), Y'

All So Stupid... Their lp *Van Full Of Pakistan* is gonna be one of the hottest releases of '93, and you heard it here first. The new-new school, fresh for the 9-3 and beyond.

Probably the finest release the hip hop nation had to offer in late '92 was from 3 brothers from Mt Vernon who call themselves the *Roughhouse Survivors*. Relativity Records been coming correct with Common Sense, Chi Ali, 2 Black 2 Strong -- but hey, Roughhouse is the bomb. Produced by Tony Dofat



Hispanics are coming out and voicing their side of things, and rap as a whole has proven over and over that it's just one constant progression. It just keep growing and diversifying, which is good.

As you know, for every Lord Finesse we've got a Hammer. For every House Of Pain, we've got a Marky Mark, and for every Mellow Man Ace, there's a Gerard. Which ain't necessarily bad either. My question is this: While Marky, Gerardo and Hammer wallow in a (suck)cesspool of teenyboppers, Lord Finesse is known & pumped up primarily in progressive underground black circles. Mellow Man Ace is all that in Hispanic circles, but House Of Pain is just large with everybody. You got brothers going "Top o' tha mornin' to ya" as they pass. Every white teenage male owns the CD or tape and practically



Public Enemy

PHOTO BY SHAWN SCALLEN

and featuring guest appearances from Lord Jamar, CL Smooth, and Grand Puba, flowin' hard as a motherfucker, knockin' every new jack out the box as the most important newcummers to the all powerful hip hop nation. Much respect.

I liked the fact that *MC Serch* used a lot of live instruments on his album. The brother has a lot of heart, good flow, and hey, he could never be justifiably disrespected. To me, though, he's just so politically correct

and tries too hard to prove he's real. I've always like *Pete Nice* better, though, cuz he was always more mysterious. You never really got to get down on his vibe, which is cool because it doesn't clutter his tracks at all, and his new shit is just too phat. DJ Daddy Rich still tears the life outta them 1210's and Pete just flows like the Nile, on and on. Crazy mad flava.

Oh and speaking of Mad Flava, H-town about to come correct. Rap A Lot's finally stompin' to the 90's and dropping a group called *The Odd Squad*. Jazzy underground hardcore funk on the out of step tip. Produced by DJ Styles and Rob Quest, believe me, y'll gonna bug out on this shit.

On the satanic, evil, violent, maniacal, just fucked up hip hop front, we've got *Esham* (from Detroit) and *Insane Poetry*, both of whom got the wild shit-like rituals on wax. *Esham's Judgment Day Vol. I & II* is just a non-stop plunge into the depths of hell and degradation, like when you kicked back watchin' the news and they alla sudden show some guy who raped his daughter and shoved her down the garbage disposal. Your stomach turns and all reality is lost. Not for everyone. *Insane Poetry* is on the same vibe, but *Esham* goes way overboard.

A couple of hip hop fanzines have hit the scene in the last year or so, the first of which is called *Bomb* (\$2 from 4104 24th St, #105, San Fran-

cisco CA 94114.) Issue #1 features news, reviews, Supercat, Serch, Too Short, and the return of Funkenklein's Gangsta Limpin column. *Underground Soundz* is a newsletter from Michigan that features nice graphics, reviews, and an interview with Esham. Check it out for a buck or so to 12034 Ridge Hwy, Tecumseh MI 49286.

Some of y'all may remember my South By Southwest '92 roundup report last year. The shit was butt as a Lucky Strike kicked to the curb. NoDoz and Cooly Nation, yo, they kicked the shit down there, but man, four rap groups outta like three hundred? This year let's hope SXSW beefs up the shit and showcases an acceptable amount of groups.

Heck, I'd do whatever to get a slammin' hip hop joint going for the conference. What's puttin' Texas on the map these days anyway? Grunge? Nope. Metal? Nope. Acoustic amoral drug addicts? Nope. It's hip hop: Geto Boys, Nemesis, Willie D., Scarface, International Grand Posse, dems guys is the ones getting the South its props. Look where two of the biggest acts of '92 came from - Kriss Kross and Arrested Development. From the South. Two Live and them brothers in Miami pump the hell outta the South. So, SOUTH by SOUTHWest, give the culture its props. It's the only true alternative anymore anyways.

Maybe I'm just being idealistic. I love the hip hop culture and have for a long time now. I jumped at the chance for this column and same for when I got offered my radio show. Yup, me and the crew gots us a strictly hip-hop flavored joint on World Radio 90.1 KPFT in Houston. It's a community-sponsored Pacifica station and we're on from 1 am to 5 am every Sunday night/Monday morning and it's called "Droppin' Bombs Till The Break Of Dawn." We showcase the best in hip hop from around the world, feature interviews with Houston's (and beyond) finest, and keep all the joints phat. Send yer demos.

Which reminds me, if anyone reading this here mag does or knows about an underground hip hop radio show, get in touch. I'd love to write about it and trade tapes.

Back to the records... I've heard a lot of idiots disrespecting *Public Enemy's Greatest Misses*. Most say it just ain't up to par. I say do something better.

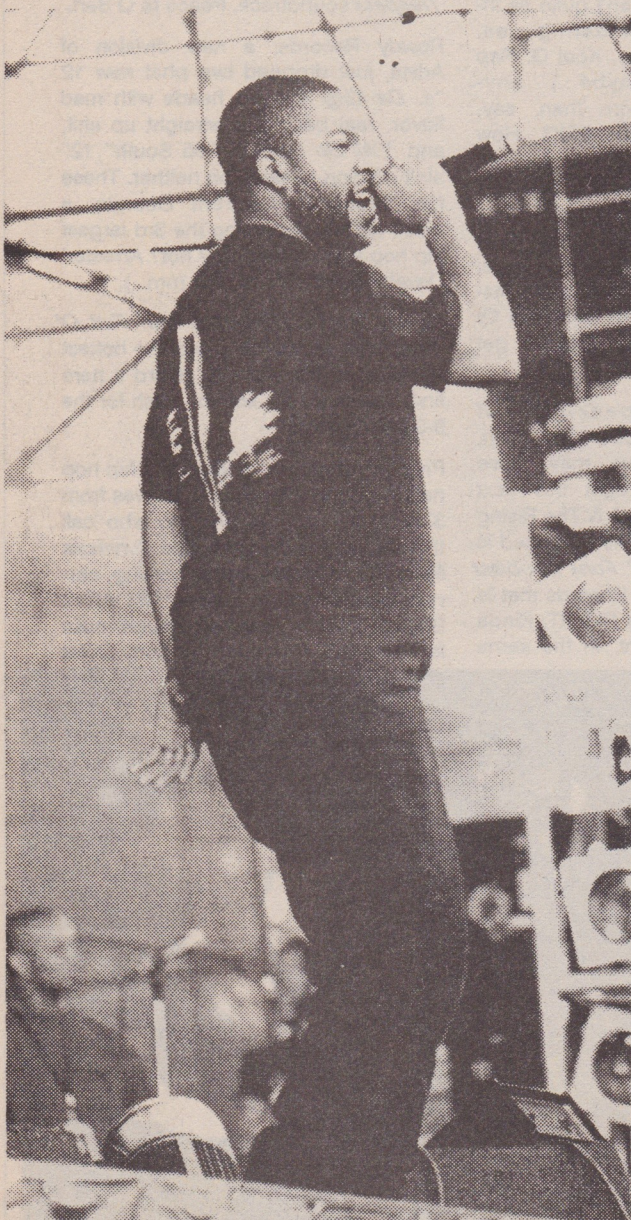


PHOTO BY SHAWN SCALLEN

Ice Cube

Even the butt-assesst stuff PE could spew is probably better than your best, so step back. The remixes are interesting, to say the least, adn the new tracks (with the exception of "Get Off My Back," which is ok) are all on point lyrically and beat wise. Go ahead, step to the squad.

One of the better singles to be released in late '92 was "Who Got The Props" from three brothers outta Brooklyn calling themselves *Black Moon*. This straight up hip hop crew drew the attention of Chuck Chillout, with their manic stage show, and he brought them to Michael Weiss at Nervous Records. This Beat Minerz-produced effort is the first hip hop release for Nervous and should pave the way for things to come. These brothers is rugged.

The Goats, on Ruffhouse Records, is the shit... another Hip Hop band. Politi-

cally stable, droppin' knowledge on all sorts of izzms you & I never even thought of, sprayin' crazy flavor all over the mic and keepin' the tracks FUNKY, all the way live. Expect a lot more in the way of live music in hip hop. Shit, even Willie D. went and got himself a band.

So yeah, in closing, there were tons of hip hop releases throughout the 9-2 and many have been dropped in just the last few months, too many to really get into, but here's just a quickie: Brand Nubian Records rips *Pibas*, "Punks Jump Up..." is just a sample. *All Dee* comin' correct with his "Who's The Flava?" 12" with Kool G. Rap on the B Side. *Young Black Teenagers* are black, I mean back, on the scene, and by the looks of their "Tap The Bottle" 12" on Soul, they actually have a black kid in the group now called Shorty. Good track. New school flavor outta Miami? Hell yes, check the *Home*

Team for that. *Heather B.* down with the Boogie Down team and fresh off her stint on MTV's (un) *Real World* just dropped at 12" called "I Get Wreck" and is planning an LP soon. Yo, she *all that!* And of course, if you haven't checked out the debut from St. Louis' *JCD And The Dawg LB*, you probably should. Nasty rhymes galore with some nice beats.

So hey, get in touch, send vinyl, demos, CD's, what have you, for air-play and print props. Best wishes to you and yours in '93, and stay fresh. Be on the lookout for these kids: Poetic Souls, Absolute Power, Beatnuts, Mixed Element, Tru Poise, Treble & Bass (Sweden), Papa Chuk, and comin' outta Jersey City, the whole new Flavor Unit posse including Latee, Apache, Nikki D., Brooklyn Assault Team, and the Bigga Sistas. Peace.

Mad Matt, PO Box 300829, Houston TX 77230

The Offspring ignition

manic - paced, adrenaline - packed,
hormone - surging
chunks of high speed
harmonic heaven

CD • CS • LP
E - 86424



EPITAPH 6201 SUNSET BOULEVARD, SUITE III, HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA 90028

NO SLEEP TIL BREMEN

Sleeper's European Tour Diary

The Staten Island band Sleeper - featuring John Lisa on vocals and Sal Cannestra on guitar, both of whom write for this zine - recently spent several weeks touring Europe. We've all heard about punk bands that are barely known here in the States going over to Germany or Italy, and playing in front of huge soldout arenas full of teenage girls throwing underwear on stage and hysterical, rabid fans who know all the lyrics to the band's import EPs. But what's a European tour really like for four guys with Italian last names whose idea of a great show at home is drawing forty people to a bar on Staten Island? We asked Sal to keep a diary on tour to answer those questions, and here it is. - Jim Testa

by Sal Cannestra

Tuesday Nov. 3 - Amsterdam Int'l Airport

So here we are - Sleeper, a band that couldn't get arrested in the United States, about to embark on our first-ever tour, a tour of Germany. Everyone seems to think it's incredible and everyone wants to know how we managed to pull it off. Well, I'm here to tell ya that I sure as hell don't know, but I'm along for the ride, just the same. We saw very little of Amsterdam's red light district. None, to be more precise, as we had a 10-hour drive to our first gig in Essen on Wednesday.

Wed. Nov 4 - Essen, West Germany

John woke me up with the news that Bill Clinton will be the next Pre-

sident. I thank God, despite the fact that I will have to listen to Marc moan and groan about Ross Perot for the next three weeks.

Played our first gig in the basement of a Youth Center with Bella Belubba and Hammerhead. About 70 kids showed up to watch us play a painfully out-of-tune set. The club provided us with the works - cases of beer & soda, snacks, hot food, you name it. We are in total and complete awe. Playing in the States usually means getting nothing and smiling while they give it to you.

Money is good but expenses are high, and we need to clear \$2,300 just to make back our airfare. We'll see.

Thurs. Nov.5 - Wermelskirchen

Today we started our first half of the

tour with Sway Skid, a German pop/punk band also on 42 Records. Well, almost started. It seems the police received one too many noise complaints and closed the place down two days before we got there. The club is letting us sleep on the floor tonight. He is also providing us with dinner, breakfast tomorrow, *and* about \$300 because he couldn't notify us ahead of time. Hello? You're paying us \$150 for not playing?? This is starting to sound like a Marx Brothers routine ("How much do you get paid *not* to rehearse?" "Oh, you couldn't afford that!")

Fri. Nov. 6 - Seigen

Got to see Sway Skid for the first time tonight and they were great. Ste is a terrific guitarist ala Stephen Egerton - lots of spastic half-chords that don't look like they'll make sense until you hear them. Sanni is a very good singer, but she doesn't seem to be enjoying herself up there. I think she's just shy.

We played what was probably our best gig ever tonight. The crowd of about 125 was rabid. There was even a kid up front singing along with our songs! We planned on doing 15 tunes and wound up doing 22. That's everything we knew including a Monsula cover, a Napalm Death cover and Iron Maiden's "The Trooper" (something we swore we wouldn't do.)

Went to our first party tonight at the local University. Lots of people from the show were there, but few approached us to say hi. Headed back to the dorms very quickly. So much for the swinging night life.

Sat. Nov. 7 - Luxemburg



Drove four hours to Luxemburg on four hours sleep only to load our equipment up four very narrow flights of stairs. There were around 50 people tonight, 20 of whom were young kids looking for a reason to slam and stagedive -- we were it. Should have about two hours sleep tonight but at least I'll get to take my first shower since Wednesday.

Sun. Nov. 8 - Hussum

Just finished playing an anti-fascism benefit with Supertouch at a club called Born Dusch. About 120 showed up and were really getting into it, even though this was an older crowd and dancing was minimal. Supertouch were great, although it seemed strange to travel a few thousand miles to play with another NYC band. They are only two weeks into a 10-week tour that will keep them here through the holidays.

Mon. Nov. 9 - Hussum

Slept with 7 other "manly" men in the living room last night. Today is our only "official" day off. Spent it washing clothes and bullshitting with Supertouch about Howard Stern, obscure metal bands, and our pets.

Tue. Nov. 10 - Lubeck

Played for 20 crusty old-school punks, none of whom paid to get in. Some joker pulls the power on us twice during the first song (possibly because Marc hit him in the jaw with his bass.) In a fit of anger, Mike throws his guitar to the floor, breaking the head stock in two. We finish the show with a borrowed guitar and spend the night arguing over whether we should have kicked the guy's ass. I argue against it for two reasons: (a) I didn't think pulling the plug for a few seconds was any big deal, and (b), being a few thousand miles from home means there's little chance of getting any backup if necessary. We take our \$30 and get the hell out of there as quickly as possible.

Wed. Nov. 11 - Geissen

Tonight's show was cancelled, or more than likely never booked, as the folks

at the club had never heard of us. They are nice enough to let us sleep on the floor of their kitchen. I pass the time watching *Married With Children* in German and keeping an eye out for the rat whose droppings litter the stairs. On the heels of yesterday's fiasco, this couldn't have come at a worse time.

Thurs. Nov. 12 - Weimer

Our first day in East Germany. Mike has Crazy Glued his guitar back together. We really needed a day like today. The club was beautiful, the crowd was with us 100% and the money was better than we expected from E. Germany.

Alex's cooking expertise comes in handy once again as he manages to make a tasty meal from some boiled potatoes, frozen spinach, and an egg. Right now, I'm laying down in a freezing cold squat with dust raining down through cracks in the ceiling. It's Miller-time.

Fri. Nov. 13 - Bautzen

Bautzen housed a large prison for political dissidents during the Communist occupation and is still apparently very right-wing. Still, every kid at the show tonight had anti-Nazi patches on his or her faded denim

another 2 hour nap before tomorrow's eight hour drive.

Sat. Nov. 14 - Waibling

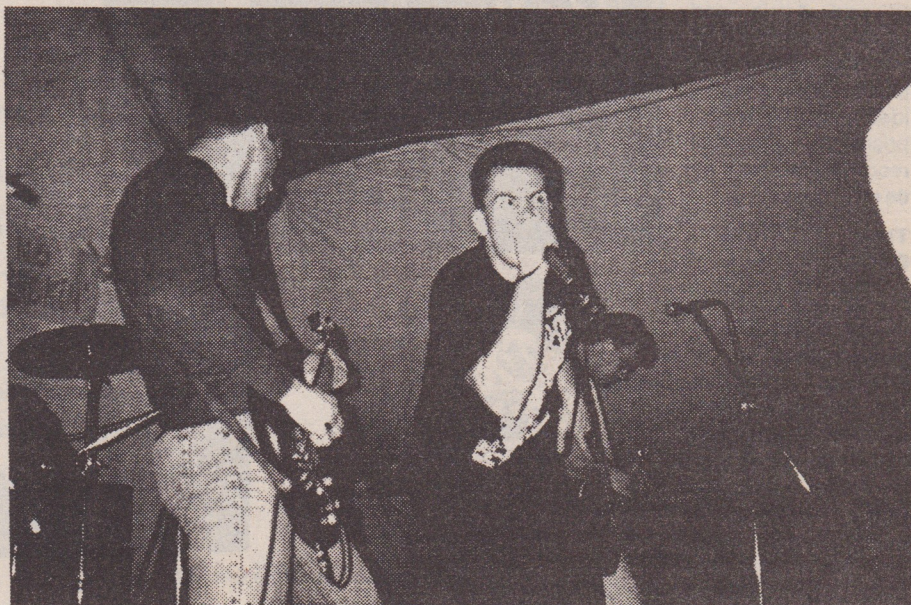
We were supposed to be playing with Supertouch again tonight. However, their singer Mark has come down with appendicitis and is stuck somewhere in a German hospital. Makes me appreciate our comparatively good luck. The crowd picks up John and holds him aloft for a good five seconds. A new John Lisa record. Tonight, I slept in an actual bed for an actual 8 hours only to be awoken by Ravel's "Bolero" turned up to 11. (Sanni's idea of a wake up call.)

Sun. Nov. 15 - Kassel

Our first show with Sharon Tate's Children. It's fun to be playing with a band that doesn't fit the normal rock music parameters (Hammond organ replacing the standard guitar setup in their case.) We launch into "R.T.D." and the crowd covers us and everything in sight with confetti. Once again they go ballistic during "The Trooper." Have we stumbled on some previously unknown link between Iron Maiden and hardcore?

Mon. Nov. 16 - Stuttgart

Another loooooonng drive to playin



jacket. Another great Youth Center show, packed with kids flying from the stage every few seconds. Took my first shower since Monday, standing in some kid's bathtub with no hot water and no shower curtain. Tonight is

the basement of an abandoned building (used as a bomb shelter in WWII.) The can was passed around and people were pretty generous. Slept in my own bed for the first time, thanks to the bottomless generosity of Ste and

his mom. How I've come to appreciate the simple things -- sleep, heat, hot water, etc.

Tue. Nov. 17 - Munich

Tonight, a bunch of kids complained because Sleeper went on first instead of Sharon Tate. It seems they were outside hanging out during the first band thinking it was the German group. Now they're pissed off because they paid and didn't get to see the "Americans." I have no use for these people.

Slept in the spare room of some famous German poet and novelist whose name I don't remember. What a cultural slob I am.

Wed. Nov. 18 - Nagold

Another Youth Center, this time in the hometown of X-Mist Records. Watched dozens of barely pubescent kids stand around smoking away while chatting with that oh-so-bored look on their faces. What is it like to be jaded at 13? Spent the night at X-Mist House and got to raid Armin and Ute's store in the morning. Didn't buy much however, as the idea of paying import prices for American records seemed a little ridiculous.

Thur. Nov. 19 - Seigborg

Played a good show for about 50 very cool people. The promoter is again paying us money over & above his take at the door. He is also putting up all 11 of us at his house. Tomorrow is our last long drive, this time to Berlin. We think both Crawlappy and Sick Of It All are playing there as well. Don't know how it will affect our turnout.

Fri. Nov. 20 - Berlin

Tonight was rotten. The club was filled with trendy-looking drunks who didn't think we were hardcore enough. They

don't give a shit about what we're playing but then yell & scream for an encore. We give 'em Napalm Death but they didn't even deserve the extra 40 seconds.

Sat. Nov. 21 - Chemnitz

When loading out of the club in Berlin this morning, I made the mistake of using the front door. I didn't realize they were hosing a women-only breakfast. Chased out the back door by 20 very upset lesbians who felt my presence had wrecked their day.

Played our biggest show ever in front of 300 people. the promoter paid us almost double our guarantee because the turnout was so good. Once again,

doesn't really matter one bit. Our flight is early in the morning and since we left our alarm clock in Munich, I have volunteered to stay up all night to wake the others at 7:30 a.m.

The Grand Totals:

Days in Europe - 22

Shows - 16

(Cancellations - 2)

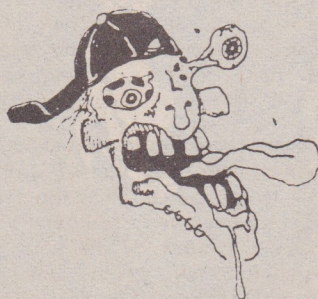
Showers - 9

Beds - 5

Non-vegetarian meals - 2

Money - lost

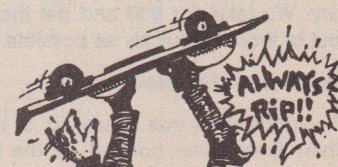
Experience - immeasurable



East Germany has come through.

Sun. Nov. 22 - Potsdam

Our last gig. One of the club's promoters was killed by some skinheads just two days before this show. Most of the kids in town are at an anti-fascism rally in Berlin today. So we played out last show to about 25 people and it



Hey there! Welcome to 1993 and the second installment of "Frayed At The Edges". This time out I had a lot of material to pick through and found as many new bands that I could. I also have included more unsigned bands from the area that you might want to write to or find at your local record store. In any case, hope you enjoy reading the reviews! If anyone would like to contact me, my address is: Hayley Greif, PO Box 215, Hightstown, NJ 08520.

To start this column out I'd like to focus on a company as opposed to just one band. It is an independent company called JL AMERICA, based in Massachusetts. The label specializes in death metal and has a pretty good lineup of underground bands. Recently the label has hooked up with Osmose Records in France, so they should have some great imports coming into the country. Some of the bands that the label has released recently include Malicious Onslaught's self titled CD and Acheron's "Rites of the Black Mass" (one of my faves on the label). I haven't heard all the bands that they have out but I can say that if you like death metal, you should definitely look into finding out more about the label and its bands. Write to JL America at: 251 West Central Street, Suite #141, Natick, MA 01760.

Ever hear of the band LAST REMAINS? If not, you'd better listen up. This is a four piece band from Summit, New Jersey that has blown me away with the release of their demo "Grasp for Existence". The band consists of O.T. (vocals), Adam Tranquilli (former guitarist for Bloodfeast), Bob McLynn (bass), and Adam Kieffer (drums). Musically the band is very technical in defining their own sound and O.T.'s singing ability sets the band above many of the bands that flood the market today. They are a progressive metal band with melodic vocals and intelligent lyrics. All the six songs, including the instrumental title track, are great but the standout for me is "Born Again", which is about looking back on your life and wondering what it would be like to live it again knowing what you know now. Well, I can't say enough about this band, so let me end with this: if I had a record label, I'd sign these guys before anyone else had the chance. Don't be one of the last remaining to grasp for a copy of the demo. For more info write: Last Remains, 16 Passaic Avenue, Summit, NJ 07901 or call (908)522-1495.

Sweden does it again. They have exported another great death metal band to the world. This four-piece band is named THERION and has recently released their 8 song CD "Of Darkness" domestically through Grindcore International. I liked this band as soon as I heard the lead off track "No Return". Therion plays straight ahead death metal with some very cool riffs and mood changes that keep your attention throughout the disc. Vocalist/guitarist Christofer Johnsson is a gifted songwriter that tackles issues like oppression in the song "Morbid Reality", war in "Megalo-

maniac", and drug abuse in "A Suburb to Hell". Therion is a band that has a promising future with the release of "Of Darkness". If you're interested in hearing a band that is a cut above many of the death metal bands out now, definitely check these guys out! You'll be glad you did.

Atlantic Records has another hit on their hands with the band STONE TEMPLE PILOTS, who have issued their debut "Core". The band is from Seattle and though they have some riffs reminiscent of Nirvana and Pearl Jam, they are

by Hayley Greif



FRAYED ON THE EDGES

able to stand on their own throughout the 12 song release. I remember the first time I saw the video for "Sex Type Thing" on MTV and I wanted to hear more from the band, so I was excited to find a copy of the tape in my mailbox. Stone Temple Pilots take you on an emotional ride through their music and lyrics. They change the feel of the tape many different times -at first they start out heavy and then mellow and it

moves back and forth during the whole tape. All the songs are good but my favorites are the heavier songs "Dead And Bloated" and "Sex Type Thing". These guys were picked to open the second part of the Megadeth tour, so if you can, see them live. If you are not able to, pick up a copy of "Core" and see what the band is all about.

Are you searching for something a little different from the normal death metal bands? Look no farther than Keyport, New Jersey and you'll find the death horror band PSYCHOSIS. I have a copy of the band's debut EP "Face" that was released in 1991. At the time the band had only been together for four months, but sound like they had been playing together for a few years. This four-piece band consists of Tom May (vocals), Doug Grandon (guitar), John Zebro (bass), and Ed Szaloczy (drums). Musically the band fits in well with the likes of Morgoth and Unleashed. The EP contains 7 songs and an interesting instrumental called "Endtro". Some of the song titles are "My Private Hell", "Terminators", and the title track. These songs are based around the concepts of horror and gore that make for an

interesting listen. Presently, the band is in the studio recording their first release on Criminal Records and hope to have it out in early 1993. I'm anxious to hear the new release and I think you should be keeping an ear out for this local band. For more info write to the band at: Psychosis, c/o Doug Grandon, 313 Broad Street, Keyport, NJ 07735.

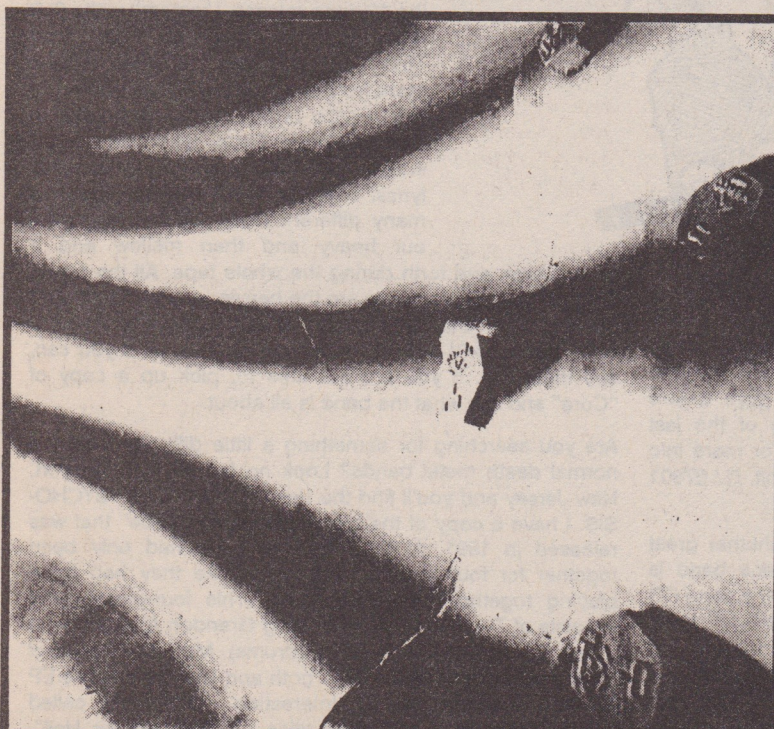
Does anyone remember the band Wrath who had a few albums out in the mid 80s? The reason I ask is because the former vocalist, Gary Golwitzer, now fronts the band STYGIAN. I have known about this band for a few years now through seeing their flyers in letters I got from penpals but never really heard what their music. Stygian is a five-piece thrash band from the Chicago area that has recently released "Planetary Destruction" on Leviathan Records (David Chastain's record label). The band reminds me of older Testament, though Golwitzer's vocals are more in the vein of Steve Sousa from Exodus. Lyrically, the band is very much involved with the current situations facing the world today and present these problems by creating visual images for the listener. Some of the song titles are "Needful Things", "Fall From Grace", "Catastrophic Deed", and the title track. Though the band's name is synonymous with dark and dismal, I see a bright future for them.

Though they are not a new band, NUCLEAR ASSAULT will be presenting a new lineup and release on I.R.S. Records in the "New Year. The band has replaced Dan Lilker and Anthony Bramante with Dave DiPietro and Scott Metaxas, two experienced area musicians. "Something Wicked" is the title of the new release that will appeal to older Nuclear Assault fans as well as gain new fans. The inclusion of

DiPietro and Metaxas has allowed the band to progress forward while looking to the past by giving the band a heavier sound reminiscent of their early releases. There are a lot of good tunes here, especially "The Forge" (a heavy ballad), "Chaos" (my fave), and "To Serve Man". Nuclear Assault is stronger, heavier, and better than ever with a release that will bring them back into the spotlight again.

I recently received a compilation tape called "The New Power" by the local record company Redline Records. It is a 13 song tape that highlights some of the bands around the area. The tape has an interesting mix of bands, whose musically range from commercial to thrash metal. Side 1 is all commercial bands that could fit in on a Top 40 station. My favorite band on Side 1 is Seventh Blessing as they are a little more progressive in style than the rest. Side 2 contains the heavier bands in the area like Bloodshed and Attica. Personally, I prefer Side 2 as I enjoy thrash more than commercial metal. If you are wondering what some local bands that you read about sound like, pick up a copy of this comp and find out for yourself. For info on the comp or any other bands on Redline Records write to them at: PO Box 226, Jamesburg, NJ 08831.

The band BLIND MELON were known for some time before they released their self-titled debut album on Capitol Records. First, lead singer Shannon Hoon guested on the G'N'R song "Don't Cry" as well as the video and then the band went on tour with Soundgarden as the opening act and finally, they released a video for the song "Dear Ol' Dad" a few months before "Blind Melon" came out. I've liked the band ever since I saw them on the Soundgarden



JAWBOX

Records & Stuff We Sell:

- 77. JAWBOX 2-song 7" (A)
- 76. SHUDDER TO THINK 2-song 7" (A)
- 75. HIGH-BACK CHAIRS 6 song EP 1* (B)
- 74. HIGH-BACK CHAIRS 2-song 7" (A)
- 73. CIRCUS LUPUS 2-Song 7" (A)
- 72. SEVERIN 'Acid to Ashes + Rust to Dust' 1* (C)
- 71. NATION OF ULYSSES 'Plays Pretty' 1* (C)
- 69. JAWBOX 'Novelty' 1* (C)
- 68. GRAY MATTER 'Thog' 1* (C)
- 67. SHUDDER TO THINK 'Get Your Goat' 1* (C)
- 66. LUNGFISH No. 65 & 1st E.P. (E)
- 65. LUNGFISH 'Talking Songs for Walking' 1 (C)
- 64. BEEFEATER Both L.P.s + 2 Songs (E)
- 63. CIRCUS LUPUS 'Super Genius' 1* (C)
- 62. JAWBOX 'Tongues'/'Ones & Zeros' 7" (A)

(Also available as cassette *Available as CD, price code 1)

Price Guide, including postage, in U.S. \$:

	U.S.A.	SURFACE & CANADA	Airmail
(A) 7"	3.00	4.00	6.00
(B) 12" EP	6.00	8.00	11.00
(C) LP	7.00	9.00	12.00
(D) CD	8.00	9.00	11.00
(E) MaxiCD	10.00	11.00	13.00

Illustrated CATALOG!
please send one US \$ or
4 US stamps or 4 IRCs.



For a plain but complete
LIST of records, send
us a US stamp or an IRC

3819 BEECHER ST. NW, WASH., D.C. 20007



Blind Melon

Photo by Greg Leomporra

tour and was psyched to get a copy of the CD. But what do Blind Melon sound like? They are a bluesy unit in the vein of the Black Crowes. The guys are a tight unit who sound like they have a good time making music together. While listening to the CD I felt the urge to get up and dance, but restrained myself so that I could write this review. All 13 songs are fun to listen to but I really like the song "Tones of Home" best. Searching for a release that will pick you up and make you feel good, then look no further because Blind Melon will take care of you.

I have learned to never judge a book by its cover, or a band by its name and demo title, with the demo "Cause of Death" I received from the band REDRUM. My instinct told me that this was a death metal band but it turns out that the band plays progressive metal. Redrum is based out of Connecticut and consists of Stymie (drums), Phil Ciuffi (bass), Jarrod Rizzi (lead vocals), and Kevin McMullen (guitar). The demo is well produced and contains four memorable tracks including "Fastlane" and "Battle Cry". Rizzi's vocals complement the music that makes for a pleasing sound to the ears. Though their name and the demo title deal with death, the only thing that would die is the tape if it gets played too much. To find out more write to: Redrum, c/o Ciuffi, 43A Post Rd., Madison, CT 06443.

Have you ever tried the "Foul Taste of Freedom"? If not, you can get your chance if you pick up the new release on Energy Records by the band PRO-PAIN. They are a three-piece thrashcore band from the New York area who are trying to make themselves known on a national level. The band is very concerned about the world around us and deal with many important issues like "Iraqnophobia",

"Lesson Learned", and the title track. Pro-Pain is one of those bands that are the working people's band because they understand the feelings and concerns of these people. If you like thrashcore or want to hear a band that has important things to say, get this release. After exercising your freedom by getting a copy, you might find that you have a foul taste in your mouth. Know what it is? Something called reality.

Blackout Records from New York has unleashed a band for us to hear: SHEER TERROR. The band is made up of Mark Neuman (guitar), Mike Walter (bass), David Todd (Drums), and The Rev. Paul Bearer, Esq. (vocals). Sheer Terror is an outspoken band that say what they feel. This band plays thrashcore in the same vein as Biohazard, but gives it their own feel. The nine song CD "Thanks Fer Nuthin'" contains songs that have an interesting approach to songwriting -every song is written in the "I" persona. I found that I was able to see this person singing the songs and understand what he was feeling. Some of the song titles include "Time Don't Heal A Thing", "Yesterday's Sweetheart", and "Close My Eyes". To get a copy of the CD or to find out more about the band write to Blackout Records: PO Box 544, Yonkers, NY 10710.

A friend of mine gave me a copy of the latest effort by the death metal band DISMEMBER, so I thought I'd add it to the column. The release, on Nuclear Blast America, is a 6 song EP entitled "Pieces". Dismember is a five piece band from Sweden and does the country's death metal legacy proud. This is a good follow up to their debut "Like An Ever-Flowing Stream" and I'm anxious to hear what they will come up with next. The six songs include "Carnal Tomb",

"Torn Apart" and the title track. I recommend this tape if you are into death metal. I have to warn you that this is an intense release and after listening to the tape you may have to gather all the pieces of yourself off the floor.

Are you part of the rat race in today's society? If you answered yes then I'd like to introduce you to the New Jersey band RAT RACE who give different meaning to the words. This band doesn't try to pass off anything by playing sloppy, but instead have put out a clean sounding self-titled three song demo. The band is Luke Darnell (vocals), Jon Presnell (bass), Soos (drums), and Joe Young (guitar). Musically the band plays commercial metal that is upbeat and fun to listen to. The songs on the demo are "Freakshow", "Bittersweet", and the interestingly named "Sex In A Six Pack". Rat Race is a band that will take you away from the monotony you hear on the radio all the time and have you scurrying around to hear more. To get a chance to be part of this Rat Race, write to: 62 Western Avenue, Morristown, NJ 07960 or call (201)538-3986.

Metal Blade Records are expanding out to the industrial genre and have picked up the Canadian band MALHAVOC, who have recently released "Premeditated Murder" on the label. This band has set itself from the norm with its approach to music and the views that lead vocalist James Cavalluzzo expresses. Musically the band would fit in well with what Ministry is doing now - they are a heavy band that intertwines metal and industrial. Side 1 of the tape consists of new songs by the band and Side 2 has older songs they recorded between 1985 and 1987. Some of the titles are "Languish", "The L.O.C. (Loss Of Control)", and "Empirical Minds". It is hard to really explain what Malhavoc is like, so if you're curious definitely check them out for the music and the lyrics. It will be an experience you won't forget.

I'd like to end the column by looking at a couple of fanzines I've received recently. The first one is NO GLAM FAGS, a 68 page zine that covers the whole spectrum of metal. Featured bands in Issue #6 include Non-Fiction, Confessor, Epidemic, Overkill, Suffocation, Grave, Obituary and many more. The zine also has a great deal of demo and label bands reviewed, as well as video reviews to keep you updated on the latest releases and happening bands. There is a couple of pages with the latest info and a LA Scene Report. Plus the zine has a lot of flyers for other zines that you might be interested in writing to. All in all a great zine filled with a lot of cool reading. The other zine is CURIOUS GOODS, which is a lot like NGF but has 96 pages and has Issue #7 available. There is also a section of reviews of live show in the area. Featured bands here include Pantera, L7, Iced Earth, GWAR, Demolition Hammer, and Body Count. To find out more about the zines you can write to No Glam Fags at: 1626 N. Poinsettia Pl. #208, Los Angeles, CA 90046 or Curious Goods at: 3754 Almond Dr., Oxnard, CA 93030.

SUBURBAN UPRISING

Adrenalin O.D.
Das Darnen
New Breed
Windbreakers
Young Turks
Frozen Concentrate
Bandables
Love Pushers
Tiny Lights
Mod Fun
Alter Boys
Lord John
Bleasted Youth
Sacred Denial
Skulls



FOR YOUR EARS ONLY

Yo La Tengo
The Disturbed
Spiral Jetty
Mod Fun
Porno Sponges
Stet
The Burnt
Urgent Fury
Balloon Squad
Mopeds
SMERSH
Sarcastic Organism

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Ween
Leeway
Phantom 5
Mod Fun
Cowboy & Spingirl
The Blisters
Mechanical Bride
APPLE
Wasserman Love Puddle
Porno Sponges
The Exposed

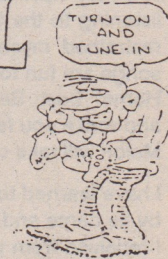


DOWNFALL PINK LINCOLNS LOST SCOOBY GROOVE TONKA LINT ANTHROPHOBIA

A 60 Minute Cassette Compilation

NICKEL BAG

THE JERSEY BEAT
COMPILATION #5

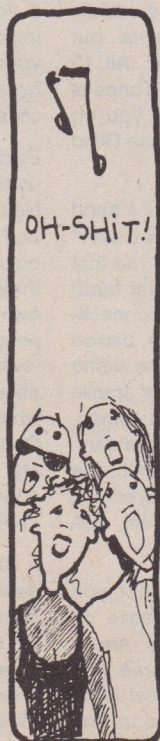


THE A.G.'S GUTWRENCH CRANKSHAFT MILE ONE BEN WEASEL CROCODILE SHOP

The Jersey Beat Compilations

\$4
Each

Cash or money order to
Jim Testa
418 Gregory Ave
Weehawken NJ 07087



15 minutes WITH WEEN

By Jim Testa

Gene and Dean Ween, those wacky imps with the monkey faces, foul-mouthed lyrics and a trunkful of crazy tunes, didn't show up for our scheduled interview, shortly before they played to a soldout crowd at Maxwells back in November. Instead, we spoke to Aaron Freeman and Mickey Melchiondo.

So you're asking, what's the difference? After all, Aaron and Mickey just call themselves Gene and Dean Ween; at least a few of their brighter fans suspect they're not really brothers. But Gene and Dean are funny and bright and say all sorts of spontaneous, nutsy things. When the boys showed up for our interview, Mickey had a queasy stomach and Aaron was a little drunk, neither one felt like talking, and even though we go back to when Mickey was a cocky 15-year old (and did demo tape reviews for *Jersey Beat*), they blew me off after 15 minutes. I guess you can do that to your old friends when you're major label rock stars. We did pry a few details out of them though...

Q: So I guess the question the world really wants to know is how did Ween wind up on a major label?

Mickey: They came to us. It wasn't like we went to them.

Aaron: Yeah, Some guy from Elektra called us up and said he wanted to sign us.

Mickey: At first we said no, because we wanted to do another indie album and strengthen our bargaining position before we went to a major label.

Aaron: But this dude just kept insisting so we started talking to him, and he pretty much gave us everything we wanted.

Q: So what did you get?

Mickey: We really shouldn't be talking about this.

Q: Oh, c'mon, you can tell me.

Aaron: Well, we got a pretty good advance...

Q: I heard it was \$250,000.



Aaron: Yeah, that's about right.

Mickey: We really shouldn't be talking about this.

Aaron: And we got total artistic freedom, so they have to put out anything we give them.

Q: You did Pure Guava on your little four-track machine at home, like all your other records, right?

Mickey: Yeah, and we have about eleven more albums worth of songs already recorded, so we have the whole contract satisfied already.

Q: What does your Elektra deal call for?

Mickey: We really shouldn't say.

Aaron: We're guaranteed four albums, and we already have lots more than that recorded so it's gonna be no sweat.

Q: So since you're not going to spend any of that money on recording, what did you do with it?

Mickey: We bought a van.

Aaron: Yeah, it's a total pimpmobile. It's got a VCR, a CD player, a television, and it's got red, white and green running lights going all around the outside.

Q: Where are you going this tour?

Mickey: We're pretty much heading due south and we're hitting a lot of places we've never been before, like Georgia and Mississippi and places like that. I think we go as far south as Florida, then we go west a little bit and work our way back up and then come home.

Q: How happy are you with Pure Guava (the Elektra lp)?

Aaron: It's our best album yet.

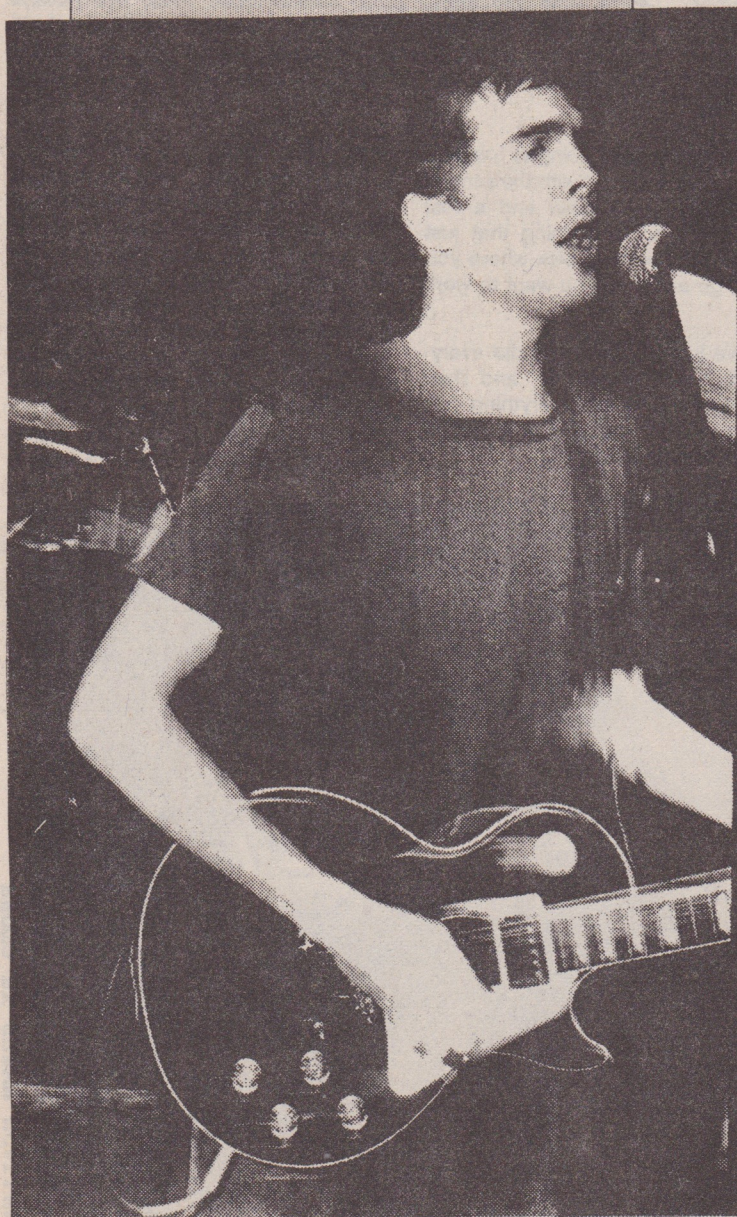
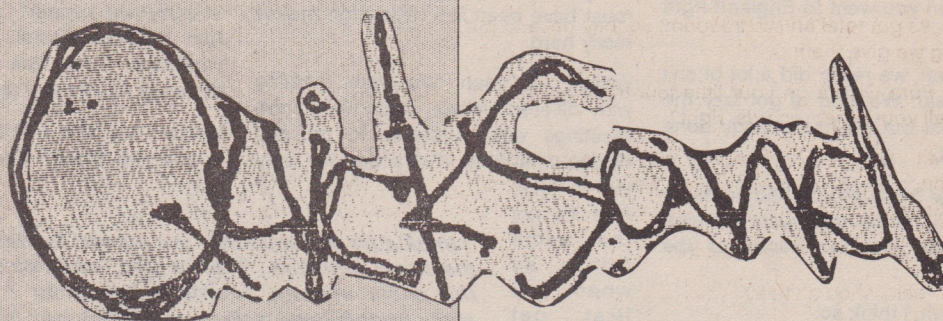
Mickey: Yeah, Ween just keeps getting better. Our first record was good, the second was better, but this new one totally rules.

Aaron: Totally.



Teen WEEN - 1988





by Jim Testa

The media have suddenly discovered the twentysomethings, a demographic they've dubbed "Generation X." They're the kids who cut their teeth on post-Vietnam angst and post-Watergate cynicism, the first generation that can't remember a time before television and moonwalks. On the one hand, the indie underground and the slacker sub-culture have made it possible for a lot of young people to extend their adolescence well into their twenties; on the other, just when they should be enjoying sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll, they find themselves confronted by AIDS, crack, and a music industry where major labels deals and lawyers and contracts, are suddenly a much more viable alternative than indie labels or the DIY punk network.

There are a lot of bands out there trying to deal with the realities of today's screwy world, from Fugazi to Firehose to Bad Religion, each doing it their own way. New York's Quicksand has its roots in the heyday of the NY/HC scene of the Eighties, in bands like Youth Of Today, Gorilla Biscuits, and Absolution. After a quickie EP on Revelation and a couple years of DIY tours, they're making their major label debut on Polydor Records, shooting videos, shmoozing the press, and trying to deal with retain as much of their punk rock integrity as they can. It's a tricky balance act, a little like trying to tap dance on...well, quicksand.

Quicksand are Walter Schreifels on guitar and lead vocals, Alan Cage on drums, Tom Capone on guitar and Sergio Vega on bass. We met them at their management's office on swanky Central Park South for a some bottled water, takeout sushi, and a little chitchat...

Q: You guys really got off the ground running when you put this band together. Didn't you record the Revelation EP like six weeks after you formed?

PHOTO BY SHAWN SCALLEN

Walter: Very shortly after.

Q: And then you went to England right after that?

Walter: Yeah, we really did a lot of shit our first year. We kind of got lazy the second year but we had already done a lot of shit.

Q: Was that because you had so much momentum, since you were coming out of really popular bands at the time?

Walter: Yeah, I think so.

Alan: Our first tour of Europe, we had "Gorilla Biscuits" on all the flyers so the kids could identify who we were.

Walter: We were just used to going out and doing things. I had just come off a tour and Tom had just come a tour when we got together, so we just called up all these people we already knew and said, we have a new group, we're ready to go out. We kind of did everything. We did the United States, we did Europe, we did England. Then by the time that first record ran out of gas, we had major label interest and then the band kinda took on a different thing. We were ready to record our record but it was like, where we gonna do it? What are we gonna do now?

Q: That must have been, given how

long major labels take to do everything, especially negotiate contracts, it must have been like hitting the brakes really hard.

Walter: Oh yeah. We were meeting with different labels, then we'd have meetings with ourselves to try and decide what kind of direction we wanted to take.

And it's not the same thing as when you first get together and it's just like, okay, let's put out a record and go out and play. We had to think about what was going to happen. Once you get involved with the serious aspects of a major label and a real contract, it's not something that just happens. You have to pick where you want to go and who you want to work with.

Alan: We just went out and did everything that was accessible, and then after we had done everything we could, we kinda stopped and started thinking about the next step.

Q: I had the feeling when you first started that you didn't really get a lot of carryover support from the fans you had in Gorilla Biscuits or Absolution or whatever. Those kids weren't going to the early Quicksand gigs, as I recall.

Walter: It's not something we were concerned about. I think we all felt that

'I think a lot of bands that are signed to major labels are in the same situation. They're like, well, we're gonna make this music anyway, so this is just lucky. I don't think too many people have delusions of grandeur because they got signed. That they're the next fucking rock and roll star. I know from our tour with Helmet, and from other friends of mine who are major label bands now, even the Rollins Band, I don't think anyone has delusions about what's going on. It's just that the time has come for this kind of music, and whatever. We're here, let's do it.'

those other bands we had been in, they had done their thing by the time we left them. Everyone felt like we didn't want to do the same thing, we all wanted to do something new. We didn't really consider whether we'd be as popular as, say, Gorilla Biscuits, we didn't think about that. We just, like, the first gig we could play was ABC No Rio, so we played it. We didn't really give a shit about who we were gonna carry over or what people were gonna think, because at that time, this is what

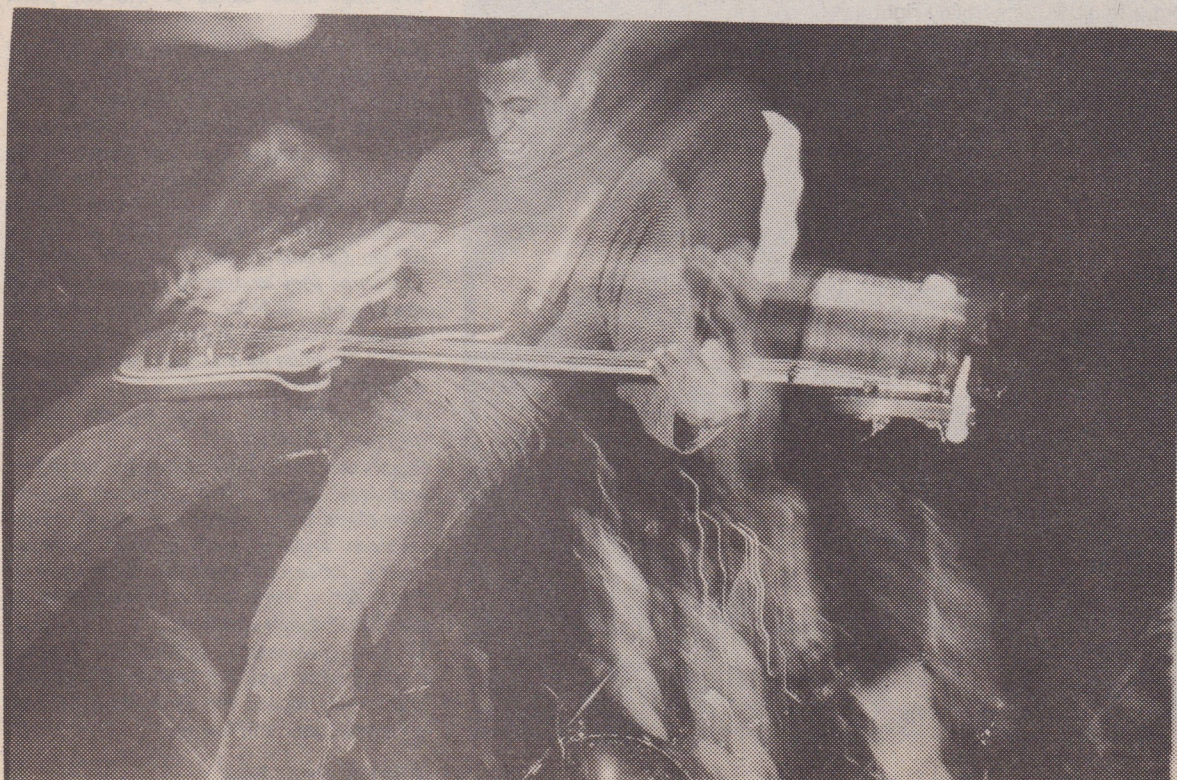


PHOTO BY SHAWN SCALEN



we wanted to do.

Sergio: And anyway, we had all been in different bands and we had different friends who would come to see us, from all the different sub-factions of the hardcore scene, and we sort of built a new following out of that. I don't remember ever playing to an empty room, I think we drew okay right from the start. So it never was a problem which portion of the kids from the hardcore scene followed us to the new band.

Walter: It really became more important to us to think about who we could get a chance to play for, who we could win over to this new band. Which is why we took whatever gigs we could get, opening for anybody there, at the beginning. We didn't care who was in the audience or how old they were, we just wanted a chance to play for them and so they would maybe hear us and like us.

Q: One thing that's got to be nice about being Quicksand is that, if you had stayed in Gorilla Biscuits or whatever, no matter how long you stayed around or how good you got, you'd always pretty much be playing for a room full of 16 year olds. With Quicksand, you have a little older and more broad-minded audience that's going to come seeing you.

Walter: Exactly. That's what we want. When we were doing the hardcore thing, I still consider ourselves from that same line. We never said, okay guys, we can't be hardcore anymore, that's over. I feel we've come directly from that scene. But like you were saying with the teenagers, I don't care how young the people are who come to see us, I just want to know that we're being perceived by different people. Not just...the same people everytime you go to a show, it's the same kids. It just gets stale. On a small scale like hardcore, or even on a bigger scale like this hair metal, it becomes just a ground out circuit, it gets stale. People want something new, they don't want to be in the same crowd anymore... We strongly identify with the hardcore crowd, with the people who are used to seeing us around the city and that we're friends with, but we can hopefully reach out and reach some more people who are looking for something but can't figure out just exactly what it is they want.

Alan: I think we lucked out in the people we did carry over from the hardcore scene, who are really open-minded. We didn't get the people scoping us out to hear our old bands. They really are into something new.

Walter: I think we reflect our audience in a way, because the audience we're playing to wants to hear something new, they don't want to hear what was

going on five years ago. They want to hear something that moves them in a new way.

Q: That's exactly why I liked you from the first time I heard you, because you don't sound like anybody else and it really is something new. I always wondered how you did that, since you came from a scene that, no matter how much people talk about punk rock being rebellion and non-conformist, is really pretty conservative.

Walter: Oh, I agree totally. Hardcore doesn't take many chances. Initially, when it was new, hardcore took a lot of chances, but by the time we were old enough to go down to the shows by ourselves, it had become conservative. Like, you could only do certain things or else it would be...

Sergio: It would not be hardcore. You'd be a rock star.

Walter: We didn't have to do much to break those barriers. Open your guitar and play some out of tune note on purpose. That would sound revolutionary, but it really wouldn't be much of anything. Hardcore had become so rigid, and the songs were so rigidly expected -- it was, okay, where's the mosh part gonna go? Where's the fast part, where's the singalong chorus? We really didn't have to do much.

Alan: We just got together and worked out some chord changes. It wasn't like,

we weren't trying to be radical, we were just trying to do something that we liked. As opposed to following the formula.

Sergio: And we're all different enough as people that once we got together, it just happened naturally.

Q: When you first started playing out, Walter didn't play guitar, right? You were just singing. Is that because, in your other bands, you were always behind your guitar as kind of the second banana and you wanted to be out front and be the leader of the band?

Walter: Initially, the first half year we were together, you're right, I wasn't playing guitar. For a while, a friend of mine was playing second guitar for us, but he was in another band called Outface and he lived in Ohio, and it just didn't work out.

So then we needed a second guitarist and nobody we tried really fit, so I said I'd give it a try. And at first, I think I really sucked, but I gave it my best try and I think I've gotten better.

Now we play as a two-guitar band. I think that initial approach to the band was much more a hardcore thing. There wasn't any hardcore playing that had a guitarist singing. It was always the guitar, and the singer guy, so the singer could run around and get everybody psyched telling them where the mosh part was. That was a big thing in my head, when I wanted to run around. But then after a while, we figured, I didn't have to do that to make this work, that's what the band does.

Q: How about getting out front and being the front guy?

Walter: Yeah, in a way. In other bands, especially GB, I had

written music for the band, and even some vocal parts, but I really wanted a chance to do a band where every single vocal idea I had could come off exactly the way I wanted. So it was like, who could do that for me? And I figured, well, I should try it. So I did it. Tom and I first started working out

'I still think the way we did it was the right way. Because it doesn't matter if the people at Polydor Records likes you. It's the kids in your town, and then the kids in the next town, they're the ones who matter. Because if they don't like you and don't want to hear your music, then it doesn't matter what fucking label you're on, you're not going anywhere.'

those ideas with another guy from Gorilla Biscuits, we had this demo called Moondog that's kind of gotten passed around. A lot of people seem to have heard it. But that's where all those ideas started. So it was time and I, and then a friend introduced us to Serge, and then Alan came along after that.

Q: Can you remember at what point the major labels started sniffing around?

Walter: First we got an offer from Relativity. And that's what usually happens, first you get an offer from somebody and other people get word of it, and then everybody wants you.

Alan: Actually, we went to Europe last year, and right before we went, we started getting a couple of calls from Geffen and somebody. And it was kind of weird, we were already going on tour and we left and then we started getting these messages.

Walter: We were getting faxes in Europe, like, "Merry Christmas, guys, Love, Polydor Records." That was cool, it was kind of exciting.

Q: Just trying to place it chronologically, was it ever in the back of your mind that you were part of the "Nirvana Effect?"

Alan: Actually, I think it all started even before the Nirvana record really took off. It was out, and Sonic Youth was

last year was because of Nirvana.

Sergio: I think Lollapalooza kind of showed everybody that the cool-hair, metal thing was dead, 'cos Lollapalooza was the best tour that year and it was all alternative bands. So the labels saw they had to start changing their outlook on what's good and what's worth signing.

Walter: But if we didn't get this record contract, we'd be on some label somewhere, we'd still be making this music. It just so happened that now we can make it and it'll be a whole lot easier, and hopefully we have a chance to get our music across to a lot more people. So it worked out good for us. I think a lot of bands that are signed to major labels are in the same situation. They're like, well, we're gonna make this music anyway, so this is just lucky. I don't think too many people have delusions of grandeur because they got signed. That they're the next fucking rock and roll star. I know from our tour with Helmet, and from other friends of mine who are major label bands now, even the Rollins Band, I don't think anyone has delusions about what's going on. It's just that the time has come for this kind of music, and whatever. We're here, let's do it.

Q: You're kind of lucky Helmet clicked first. Before them, no one had ever seen a sort of metal, sort of alternative band in Stussy gear with short hair playing that kind of music. Now they've all seen Helmet so you guys won't be so much of a shock.

Walter: Well, I hope we still manage to shock some people. But yeah, it'll be easier to be ourselves. And anyway, you can't go into this

with the pressure of thinking you have to sell so many records. You just have to be yourself and see what happens. I think that's what Helmet did and why they were successful.

Q: Is one of the reasons you signed with Polydor because they didn't seem

'We didn't think, well, I'm eating this Taco Bell burrito today, but *someday* I'll be a rock star. We were like, well, I'm eating this fucking Taco Bell burrito, and three months from now I'll be here again eating another fucking Taco Bell burrito. That's the only thing I have to look forward to, these shows and fucking Taco Bell'

signed, and people were starting to talk about Helmet and New York bands again. But I think we started getting calls even before Nirvana sold a million records.

Walter: But I do think there's definitely a correlation there. I think half of the bands that have gotten signed in the

all caught up with how many million records you were going to sell right away?

Walter: Yeah.

Alan: They came to us with their overall plan they had, and how they hoped we would sell better every album we had, as opposed to either it sells a lot at first or it's a failure.

Sergio: They were also really excited when there was no competition. We felt like they really liked us and it wasn't just a reactionary to the other labels being after us, so we felt comfortable with that.

Walter: A band like us, we're not gonna get played on the radio. At least, not in a way that's gonna sell us records. You gotta make a video. So that was all planned for.

Alan: I think we've been really lucky with Polydor too because they've been really eager to do as much as they can for us. Sometimes we even have to get them to slow down a little bit.

Walter: And it's also like any job that you might have, if you take pride in it... If a band does well, it reflects on you and says you're doing a good job. I'm sure the people who worked the Nirvana record were fucking psyched because they were part of something that was really happening and affecting the whole country. And the people at Polygram want to make their records a success too.

Q: I remember when Youth of Today and Warzone signed to Caroline back in, what, 1986 or so? It was like the end of the world on the hardcore scene.

Walter: Oh yeah. It was the end of the world to a lot of people.

Q: Things have really changed in terms of expectations, like thinking about being on an indie label first or whatever.

Walter: Yeah. I think what in effect has happened is that if you start a band and make a demo that's good enough, major labels will come check out your

band. There's no room, there's no market for truly independent music anymore. Everyone is always looking in, they're almost overeager. We're lucky because we've been in the game for a while. A band that comes out now could get signed before they even have a chance to become a real band.

Sergio: To develop.

Walter: We came out of the box real early, but we'd been around for a long time. Not necessarily as Quicksand, but we'd been going through the thing for a while now. But back when Youth of Today and Warzone signed to Caroline and everybody was going, oh, it's all ruined...

Sergio: And don't forget, you also had the Cro-Mags and Murphy's Law and Leeway signed to Profile, which was a

could've made.

Q: That's created another problem, too, if you've noticed. Because right now is *the* moment to be in a band...

Walter: Totally.

Q: And it's created all these bands who are starting just so they can get signed to a major label. They don't want to tour, they don't want to do demo tapes or 45's, they just want to play a bar someplace for a year like the Spin Doctors and then be rich and famous. Sometimes I think they don't even like music that much. At least you guys come from a very different tradition.

Walter: I personally think that's stupid. I think the best way to get signed is to go out and do that shit. Because that's



The shame is that almost everybody else I know from that era, the corporate sellout of the hardcore scene... God, they are all so disappointed with the deals they made. They could have done so much better

major label. And a lot of bands on Combat...

Walter: The shame of it is... I don't have any problems with Caroline, they were always upfront and I still get checks from them [for Youth Of Today royalties]. But the shame is that almost everybody else I know from that era, the corporate sellout of the hardcore scene? God, they are all so disappointed with the deals they made. And they could have done so much better. And now, we just happened to be born at the right time, and we can make those kinds of deals that they wish they

what we did. Go out and make your own record, sell your t-shirts, go out and play all the fucking little punk clubs...

Sergio: I think the difference between those bands and us is that we didn't do this to get a record deal or make a living, we just did it because we loved music.

Walter: We were actually so pathetic that we didn't even care if we broke even.

Alan: Yeah, we realized suddenly that we weren't teenagers anymore and we

were actually going to keep doing this, regardless of the fact that we were poor...

Walter: I still think the way we did it was the right way. Because it doesn't matter if the people at Polydor Records likes you. It's the kids in your town, and then the kids in the next town, they're the ones who matter. Because if they don't like you and don't want to hear your music, then it doesn't matter what fucking label you're on, you're not going anywhere.

Q: I wonder how many kids realize that today?

Walter: You know, that's why I never liked metal, I mean, you know, that cheesy hair metal. Because it was geared to, like, we don't want to be a band to make music, we want to be a band so we can be dicks and big rock stars. And I think that mentality has just switched over. People are thinking like, fuck, man, I can actually get a deal, my friend did it... But man, that's wrong. Be a band because you want to be a great band, and if you're good, dude, then people will check you out, not because you're cool or because you play the right show.

Q: Well, I know you guys aren't like that. You can go to a lot of cities and there'll be rows of kids in the front who'll know all the lyrics...

Walter: That's because we did all that work. We went out and put six people in a van and slept on the floor and froze our asses off, and ate Taco Bell. Because that's the work that we did and we didn't think like...

Sergio: We didn't think it was work.

Walter: Right, we didn't think, well, I'm eating this Taco Bell burrito today, but someday I'll be a rock star. We were like, well, I'm eating this fucking Taco Bell burrito, and three months from now I'll be here again eating another fucking Taco Bell burrito. That's the only thing I have to look forward to, these shows and fucking Taco Bell.

Alan: When we got together, we were thinking like, if we put this record out real fast, we can go to Europe. And then we can tour here. The idea of putting out a record was so you could go out on tour. And now it seems like that doesn't exist anymore.

Sergio: Well, the one big advantage we had is that by the time we came along, there was this network out

there. We didn't have to take the time to learn where all the places were where we could play, or what the aesthetics were of the kids at those places. We knew, because we had all been on tours and been to all those places, and knew where they were and where we could play and find our audience. Bands that don't come out of the hardcore scene don't have that kind of network to fall back on, they have to find all that out for themselves.

Q: Before we wrap this up, I just wanted to talk about your music a little more. One thing that's really obvious is that there's a lot of emotion, not just in Walter's singing but in even in the guitars. You even captured that on the album. Where does all that emotional turmoil come from?

Sergio: I don't know, but I do think that's very true of us. That's something we noticed when we were on tour with Helmet. They were always very professional, and every single night they'd be really tight and really hard and be very, very consistent. Whereas we tended to roll with our moods a lot more.

Alan: And not necessarily in a bad way. Just that, we'd use whatever it was. If we were tired or whatever, we just went with it. So we are a little more moody in that way. I mean, we're really high strung and moody in the tempos and stuff, but sometimes if you're in a

one night and they'll be one way and another night they'll be another way. A lot of times that'll be some singer who has some really eccentric personality, but I think our whole band has a collective thing about it that whatever's affecting us comes out. Sometimes we'll be really mellow and laidback and then the next time you come see us, we'll just be fucking like *AAARRRGGGHHH!!!!!!*

Q: How about some of those tunings and chord changes and stuff. You work in a lot of really cool dissonant stuff. Is that all thought out and written down, or do you improvise a lot of it?

Walter: I think real strong dynamics are what makes guitars sound emotional. I mean, the way we play. That comes from hardcore, in a sense, you know like when you're kind of laying back, like dee dee dee dee dee, then all of a sudden, wham! You just come down on a note so hard, BAH! You'll have those strong accents. I think with our stuff, you'll think our music is going one way and then we'll come down, BAH DA DA DA DA! Uh, I guess you can't print any of this, but you get the idea...

Sergio: A lot of our experimentation comes from ignorance. We are self-taught, and we've been playing for so long, that if there is anything we can't do, we find some way to make it up.

Quicksand

really laidback mood, you can play really laidback.

Sergio: I think we've even had phases where we've been more aggressive, and then we've been more mellow.

Walter: Yeah, I think that we present, when we play, how we feel collectively. The vibe, where we come off live, we change that all the time, and I think that's good. I love bands like Helmet, but I also like a band that can do different things, that you can see them

We don't know scales and... It's purely from the heart. Music for us has always been purely emotional and not something that we studied.

Q: So you just make up chords and stuff? It's not like, oh, let's stick in an F Major Diminished 7th right here...

Alan: We've had people come up to us and go, oh, you're using an F Major Diminished whatever there, and we're like, what the fuck? We don't know. We just do it.



by Kris Nicholson

Even if you've never heard a Gumball record, if you're reading this article there's just no way you haven't heard something the group's commander-in-chief - singer, songwriter, guitarist, producer Don Fleming - has been involved with. From producing Teenage Fan Club, Dinosaur Jr., Sonic Youth, Screaming Trees, Half Japanese, the Posies and Hole, to all the groups he's been a member of (the Stroke Band, Velvet Monkeys, The Upsetters, B.A.L.L., Gumball and the Dim Stars), Don Fleming has racked up more cool credits and credibility than almost anyone in the so-called "alternative" scene.

As 1993 gets underway, Don - along with bandmates Jay "The Rummager" Spiegel on drums and Eric Vermillion on bass and backup vocals - infiltrate the corporate rock ranks with Gumball's Columbia debut, Super Tasty. One listen and you'll hear the work of a group with big record collections - and I do mean vinyl - who have the good taste not to take themselves too seriously, and who hail - quite proudly - from the East Coast.

Super Tasty is as fun as it is delicious. Open wide and swallow whole!

Q: Would you agree with Mudhoney that the whole Seattle thing is "Overblown?"

Don: Well, that happens with regional scenes. Athens was the same at one time. Scenes are always going on. There's still a lot going on in D.C. but the national press can only deal with one scene at a time. Scenes are great but I think it's funny the way the press obsesses over them. It's good and bad. A lot of bands get stuck in them because in the U.S., they don't get good press exposure. Also, it's hard for a lot of American bands to play here because it's just too big. The East and West Coast are definitely like different countries. In the U.K., people know what's going on because the bands get written up in the weekly music press.

Q: We're doing this interview in October and your album is finished but won't be out until early '93. Why is that?

Don: This is the peak of grunge rock, so I wouldn't want it to come out now and have people say, 'Oh, another grunge rock band.' We're *East Coast*, dammit!

Q: In the meantime, you've released a five-song EP called "Wisconsin Hayride."

Don: Yeah. It was recorded at the same time. It was named because we did a lot of the tracking out in a barn in the woods. We loved it there and it felt like we'd taken a Wisconsin hayride. J Mascis (Dino Jr.) came out and played. On "Hayride," he's on "New Rose" and "Depression," and on *Super Tasty* he's on "Here It Comes Again" and the very last tune, "Upsetters Theme Song." We did the EP because we needed some new songs to fill up our live set and do encores. "New Rose" by the Damned is one of my favorite singles of all time.

Q: To me, "Awakening" seems to be the oddest choice.

Don: Well, I was always a big Mahavishnu Orchestra fan. Their first lp *Inner Mounting Flame* was just like, 'Oh my God!' I was way into them and then all that turned into total crap. That fusion jazz thing was the worst thing ever. But when it was out, it was like Black Flag back then. All of the songs on "Hayride" are from the underbelly of rock. It's all punk rock.

Q: The new album is your major label debut. Will it be pressed on vinyl?

Don: I don't know, good question. I hope so.

Q: Don't you have anything to say about that?

Don: To a certain extent, yeah. We can always press it and probably at least will press it for promotion, but whether or not they'll sell it is an issue that's much more difficult. I love all formats. I'd put it out on eight track if I could. We travel with 'em and take 'em on tour. We have hundreds of eight tracks, that's our musical thing 'cause especially in the U.S., at thrift stores you can buy eight track tapes five for a dollar.

Q: That sort of limits the time period of music you can listen to.

Don: That's true, I guess, but there's some good stuff on eight track. I've got *Metal Machine Music*. You can get Stooges, MC5.

Q: I wonder if the major labels will manage to totally phase out vinyl?

Don: It'll take time to find out. I'm a real archival nut. When I lived in D.C., I did recording for the National Archives. I transferred acetate discs for researchers,

GUMBALL

Putting the Gum Back Into Bubblegum

PHOTO BY MICHELE TAYLOR

and I got a real aesthetic thing for leaving things the way they originally sound. You don't change those things to make them real pleasing and more 90's sounding. They're supposed to sound the way they were originally recorded.

Q: You've been a busy guy. In addition to your EP and album, you've finished producing the Posies, and you did the most recent Screaming Trees lp. You also did the Dim Stars lp with Thurston Moore and Richard Hell. How did you wind up working with such a wide range of artists?

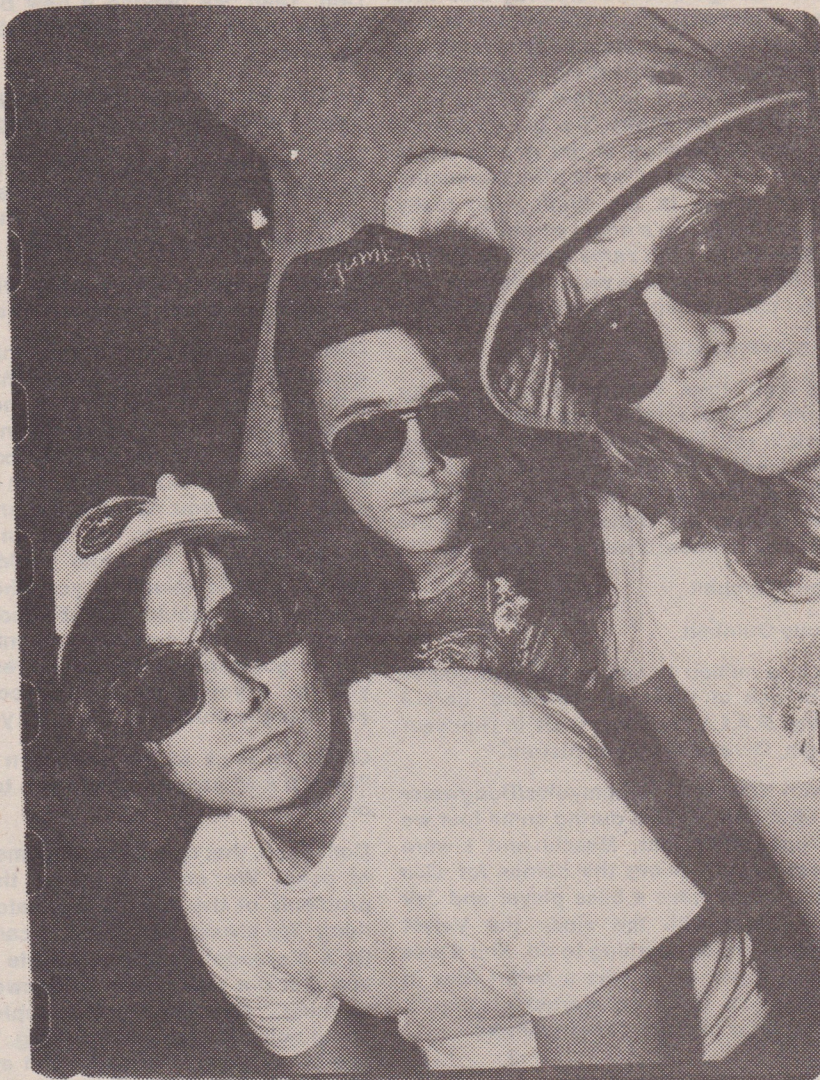
Don: In the past, I've just sort of met people, become friends and then decide to work together. Now, more and more I'm getting calls for production offers. Even with the Trees, I didn't really know those guys that well. Mark Lanagan just called me up out of the blue and was like, 'You're producing our album,' and it was like, 'Okay, no problem.'

Q: You also worked with Kim Gordon to produce Hole's first album in '91. What was that like?

Don: It was a whirlwind thing because we did it all in ten days, including mixing. It was an indie budget but we wanted to do it 24 track. It was really tough to do in such a short amount of time but Kim and I had worked together before with an all-girl band called STP. And, I think Courtney was a big Kim fan, so it turned out to be a lot of fun. I enjoyed

working with Courtney a lot. She was just so intense and really into emoting when it came to singing her parts.

Q: Would you like to produce Nirvana?



Don: Sure, but I'm sure Butch (Vig) is gonna do it.

Q: What's the best part about working with so many different musicians?

Don: It's just a fun thing. There's a lot of feedback in the studio. I've always liked bands that could improvise. One thing about H a l f Japanese and B.A.L.L., we just went into the studio, turned the tape decks on, and those were the songs. There aren't many people who can improvise without turning it into Boogie Down Productions...

The concept of one band forever would never work for me. Gumball is the band of now. It could (just as easily) be the Velvet Monkeys. This record is more like earlier VM

stuff than anything I've done since. I'm writing the songs instead of roughing them out in the studio.

Q: What kind of producer are you?

Don: I've always disliked producers who leave *their* sound on a band. I'm hesitant about singing or playing on things because of that. I

I think unfortunately in the indie world the attitude is, if you're a band member, you shouldn't worry about money, you should just be concerned about the music. Otherwise you lose your integrity. But I feel like you've got to take some of the responsibility for what you do. If you're making a record and pressing it, you're in the music biz. Then it's you against Prince.

like doing things like I'll lay down a background vocal and see if someone in the band wants to sing it. I feel like as a producer, my thing is making the band happy. You always have the pressures and politics of the label and the managers and everybody else who thinks they have a concept about the sound, but in reality, all you can do is go in there and set everything up and start listening. And I'm really into getting the sound of the band. Making it accurate. Getting what they want. Less is more, definitely. You get a lot more done that way. And the energy of the groups stays high if they're on a roll. That to me is what producing is all about. Once you're in the studio, you really listen. You make sure a group's amps sound right and that they're getting to tape the same way. The more I do it, the easier it becomes, in a way. Right now, I'm really enjoying it. I enjoy going to different studios.

Q: Do you have a favorite studio?

Don: I'm really into tube sounds. I'm into older boards. Digital fits a lot of formats like sampling and rap. But with rock 'n roll, you still need the real thing. Some studios are starting to specialize in it again. We mixed the Posies at Oceanway in L.A. in the same room where *Pet Sounds* was done, but it wasn't the same board because that board was a three-track.

Q: Let's talk about Gumball.

Don: The Fabulous Gumball.

Q: You've been in a million bands before and you've never thought of one of them as *the* band. Before Gumball there was B.A.L.L. and you were in Dinosaur for their first single. Give us a slice of history.

Don: B.A.L.L. (with Kramer of Shimmydisc/Bongwater fame) fell apart after four albums during some tour we were on in Europe. After that, Mascis and I were working with Sonic Youth doing the demos for *Goo* and at the time, J. didn't have a bass player and Jay Spiegel - who'd been with me since the Velvet Monkeys - and I didn't have anything to do. And it was 'Let's have a band together.' It was a better idea in theory than in practice. Once we started playing, it was more like two guitar players, two drummers...

Q: Two bands.

Don: Yeah. It was another case of doing whatever comes up. The first thing is, you gotta have a band. Gotta have a way to tour and make records. So with the Dino thing we did a Sub Pop single, "The Wagon" on one side and my song on the other. After we started rehearsing for the album, I realized it wasn't

going to work. It just made more sense to become two bands but it was fun while it lasted.

Q: Then came Gumball.

Don: Yeah, we needed a new band, new name. We always have one or two side bands, we have the Upsetters.

Q: That explains the theme song. I understand there was a Velvet Monkeys theme song too.

Don: That theme song was on every record. It's very anthemic, just like the Upsetters theme song. If the lyrics are a little obscure, all the better. You're not supposed to know exactly what it means.

Q: Did you ever reach a point where you decided to become a little less obscure, to become...

Don: More sellable? I think that's something you grapple with to some extent. This is my attitude. It's not my main motivation but neither is doing the opposite, which is to scorn the industry and basically screw myself by doing so... My experience through all these years of indies, and with almost everybody I know, is that you never make any money. I've done stuff I've wanted to do in an odd way. I think unfortunately in the indie world the attitude is, if you're a band member, you shouldn't worry about money, you should just be concerned about the music. Otherwise you lose your integrity. But I feel like you've got to take some of the responsibility for what you do. If you're making a record and pressing it, you're in the music biz. Then it's you against Prince.

Q: Going back to the songs on *Super Tasty*, I like "Hell Of A Message." Could you talk a little about that one?

Don: Yeah, that's an answering machine dilemma kind of song. We cover a lot of the important social problems of the day. "Accelerator," y'know, the car thing. We always have a good car driving song. "Hell Of A Message" is about people wanting something and just not being able to answer the phone in the morning. "Tumbling" and a couple of others are sorta about being at clubs and playing. "Real Gone Deal" is one of the poppier ones, I can't even remember what it's about. I've always been into the "less is more" lyrical concept. I like things that have cool rhymes and can mean at least eight different things. Lyrics should be fun, a little vague, and open to interpretation. They should be able to fit your life and what you need to hear. I certainly don't want people thinking about *me*.

18 I feel like as a producer, my thing is making the band happy. You always have the pressures and politics of the label and the managers and everybody else who thinks they have a concept about the sound, but in reality, all you can do is go in there and set everything up and start listening. And I'm really into getting the sound of the band. Making it accurate. Getting what they want. Less is more, definitely. You get a lot more done that way. And the energy of the groups stays high if they're on a roll. That to me is what producing is all about.

My World, And Welcome To It

CMJ Music Marathon '92; or, Turn That Down, My Feet Hurt!

by Jim Testa

This issue's diary focuses on the CMJ Music Marathon, which was held October 28-31. Like the New Music Seminar, the CMJ marathon brings together the flotsam and jetsam of the music biz, along with hundreds of college radio kids from all over the country and over 200 bands. Since CMJ was nice enough to give me a press pass, I used the opportunity to explore as many different venues as I could this year. We shoulda called this "Diary Of a Club Rat." After CMJ, I came down with a bad cold that lasted from Halloween well into the New Year, compounded by a painful bout with *plantar fasciitis*, which in layman's terms means my feet hurt something fierce. (It's also called tendonitis.) Anyway, all that meant that I didn't get out as much as I usually do. My sinuses and sore feet notwithstanding, Diary Of A Rock Critic will return next issue.

Wednesday, October 28

I ran into photog Shawn Scallen while I was picking up my badge and we

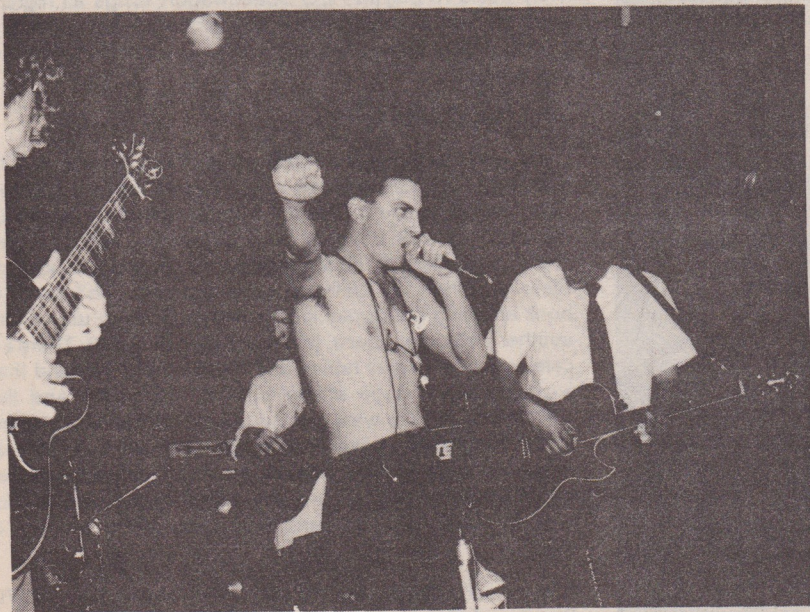


hung out together until showtime, which started off at CBGB. Not much to say about this place, it's been around forever. An all-star punk rock lineup this evening kicked off with **Crain**, a very cool new band with an angry D.C.ish sound and a maniac

drummer. Definitely want to see more of them. **Girls Against Boys** were next. This is basically Soulsides, without Bobby on vocals and with a keyboard player. The first time I saw them, they were playing out as a five-piece, with Dischord vet Eli Janney on vocals, and I thought they sucked. Janney's gone now, and what an improvement! The keyboard player adds two dimensions - not just demented garage-rock blasts of steamy organ, but equally demented backup vocals (lots of "Wee-ooo's" and such) which sound silly, but somehow just *work*.

Shawn hung around for Wool and Jawbox, two bands I would've enjoyed, but I was off to **Atlantis** to catch the revamped **Mr. Thumb**. Atlantis is a new space in a basement on W. Eighth Street down near Sixth Avenue, next to all the tee shirt stores. Their usual 8-band weeknight bills run heavily toward cheesey metal acts from the 'burbs, and the bands I've talked to about shows there haven't had many nice things to say about the place. But it's actually a nice space: a small stage, enough room for a crowd to mosh it up with tables and benches around the periphery, and a big "Atlantis" sign in Christmas tree lights behind the band.

This was Mr. Thumb's first gig with

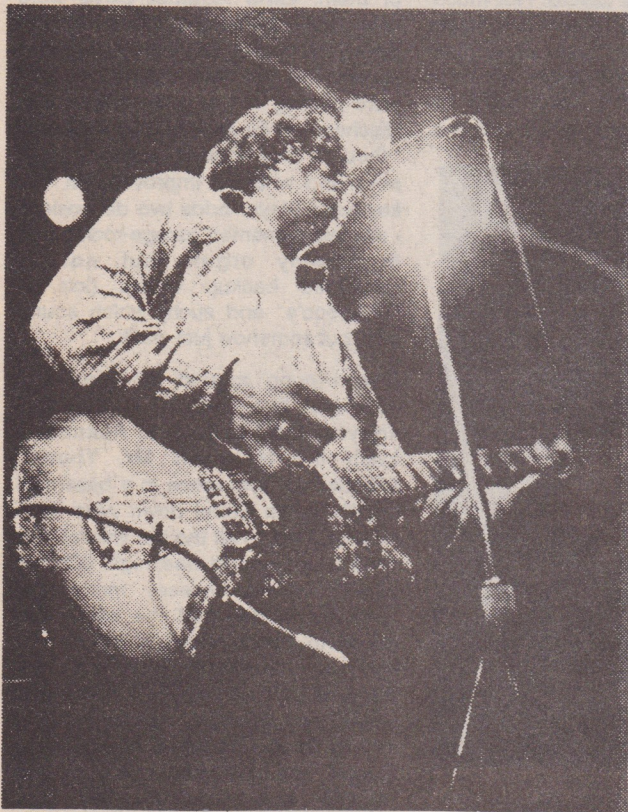


The Duckhills from Austin (top) and New York's Fenwicks: Both cool bands, huge in their hometowns, and unsigned. Photos by Jim Testa

their new singer and drummer. The drummer (Dave from Transylvia) is an enormous improvement. The singer lacks former frontman Karl Munsell's stage presence, but then, the new guy doesn't sound like Perry Farrell either, which was getting to be a problem with Karl's vocals. Guitarist Jhon Thumb provided his usual wah-wah guitar hysteria, bassist Dave added an extra layer of industrial-strength grunge, and the band signed a multi-million dollar major label as soon as they walked off stage. (Well, what actually happened was that Behemoth Records said they'd do the band's next single.) The crowd seemed to dig it too.

I hung around long enough to see most of **Trip Master Monkey**, who must've announced they were from Iowa at least a dozen times. They sounded like most of the bands around New York did about five years ago - a drop-dead cute lead singer with a big voice, jangly guitar, thrashy drums and *so* earnest you could puke. It's nice they've finally heard about R.E.M. out there in Dubuque; maybe by 1995 they'll get into the Seattle thing.

From Atlantis it was a quick jaunt over to the reopened **Irving Plaza**, the Polish ballroom that used to be the coolest New Wave club in New York. It's been a disco for a couple of years now, but apparently someone is booking bands there again. The "club" is actually just a big hall, with a balcony that runs around the room upstairs, a big stage in the front and a bar in the back. The room used to be wood-paneled but it's been painted black (which probably enhances the lights when they have dancing there.) I was hoping to catch the end of **Therapy?**'s set but that's all I got to hear -- the last ten seconds of their last song. Next up



Jhon Thumb of Mr. Thumb (top); photo by Jim Testa; Crain proved there's life yet in hardCore; photo by Shawn Scallen



were **Ned's Atomic Dustbin**, who played their new album (which hadn't been released yet, so most of the audience didn't know the songs) and a few hits from *God Fodder*. They could've played REO Speedwagon songs all night, it wouldn't have mattered to the slaphappy teenage grebos in the pit, who (I swear) started slamming while the band was still *tuning*.

Thursday, October 29

I really wanted to see **Thousand Yard Stare** at The Academy but (don't ask me why) I wound up at the **Lion's Den** instead to see **17 Relics** from Connecticut (not to be confused with 13 Stitches, who played the night before.) The Lion's Den is another relatively new club, just off Bleecker Street on Sullivan. Although they don't seem to book anything but dopey local funk bands there usually, it's another well-done space, laid out a lot like CBGB. There's a cafe setup with small tables and chairs, a big bar, and then a decent-sized stage at the back of the room. And like CBGB, you have to walk around the side of the stage to get to the bathrooms. I like it when you can walk all the way around a stage (instead of having it set into a wall), you can get much better photos! Anyway, 17 Relics turned out to be another R.E.M.-ish pop band and pretty much a waste of my time.

A quick cab ride uptown got me to the **Rodeo Bar** on 27th Street and Broadway in time to catch **The Duckhills**, an Austin band I'd seen at SXSW a few times. The Rodeo Bar is the sort of ersatz honky tonk you'd expect in that neighborhood, a place where yuppies can drown their

sorrows in \$4 draft beers and make believe they're cowboys at the same time. It's done up as a log cabin, with lots of John Wayne movie props on the walls (buffalo heads, cattle skulls, Indian scalps) and the band is stuck way in the back of a rectangular shaped room, impossible to see unless you sit right next to the stage. From the layout, I got the impression it isn't a club so much as a bar that has live music playing in the background. Anyway, nobody I knew from Austin was there hanging out, but I did enjoy the Duckhills. They've got a few things going for them that most country-western "alternative" bands lack -- a kickass rhythm section, for one thing, and a lead singer who can hold your interest even when he's sober.

I left the Rodeo Bar in a steady rain but luckily, caught a 3rd Avenue bus which took me back downtown to Irving Plaza in time to see **School Of Fish**. Like the Neds the night before, these guys insisted on showcasing their new lp (which wouldn't be out for months), so their fans - who wanted to hear SoF's first album - had to settle for "Three Strange Days," about the only recognizable song in the set. The new stuff sounded all right, although the band looked like shit, a lot thinner and wan than when I first saw them, fresh-faced and eager to hit the road. That's what a year and a half of non-stop touring will do for you.

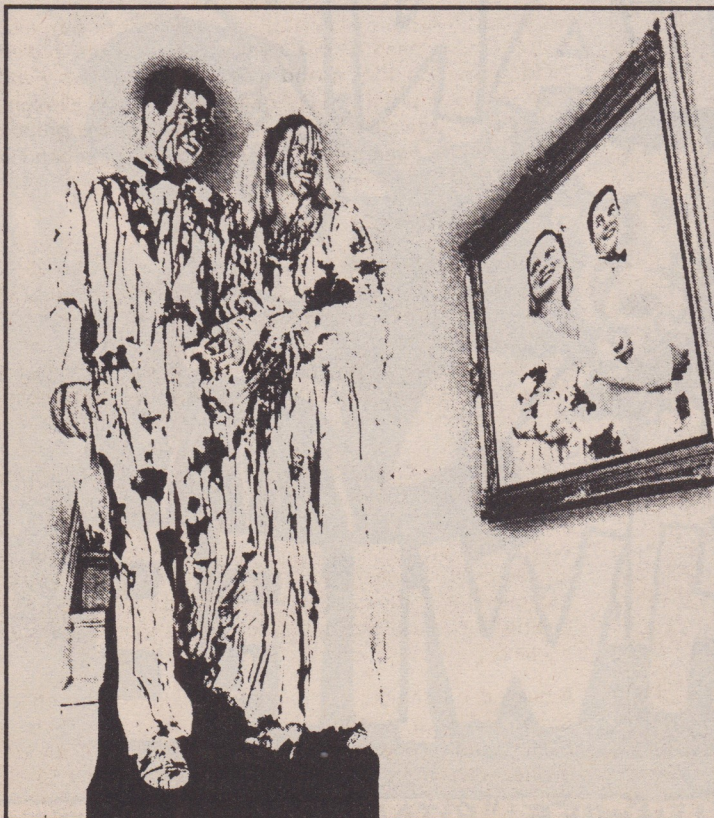
Friday, October 30

The night started with another visit to **CBGB**, just in time to catch Hoboken's **Sex Pod**. Alice and Karyn (ex-Gut Bank) had talked about their determination to get signed when I interviewed them last summer, and they scorched the eyebrows off the yahoos in the front row with the set they played at this show. If there was an A&R man in the room who didn't have a hardon and a contract in his hand by the

time they finished, he must've been deaf and blind. Things got so feverish I had to duck out for some air, and bumped into the way cool rockcrit from the Chicago Trib, Greg Kot. Greg said something snide about "New Jersey bands" so I had to get rough with the guy, but after three or four rabbit punches to the solar plexus, he reluctantly agreed to go back inside, only to be mesmerized by the gals (and later rave about them in his CMJ wrapup for the paper.)

It was deja vu all over again as I returned to the Atlantis to catch *another* refurbished New Brunswick band, **Transylvia**. These guys were also breaking in a new drummer (the old one having gone to Mr. Thumb, along with a keyboardist to be named later). This new guy turned out to be a heavy metal monster (he reminded me of that old comic strip character Alley Oop, actually) who could drown out Helmet with one tom tom tied behind his back. Whew! These guys put on the most intense, energized set I've ever seen from them, and got to play a few extra songs because none of the other bands on the bill (Maelstrom, Deep Jimi & The Zep Creams, and White Trash) showed up.

I didn't hang around Atlantis long enough to find out if any of the bands ever got there, because I had a long walk over to **Nightingales**. This is the bar that made the Spin Doctors famous, and it still plays host to lots of funk bands, seven nights a week. And it is a bar. There isn't even a stage, just a space in front of a mirrored wall where the bands set up. I had wanted to see the **Flying Nuns** from Boston, whom I had read about in *The Noise* (the indispensable guide to the Beantown band scene). Things were running a bit behind schedule (like, an hour) though, so I had to endure an entire set by the **Play Trains**, a sappy country/folk band that gave me the Screaming Meemies.



COFFIN BREAK THIRTEEN

CD/CASS/LP



EPITAPH

6201 SUNSET BLVD, SUITE 111
HOLLYWOOD, CA 90028

Happily, the Flying Nuns blew me away. Try to imagine Mission Of Burma playing the first Talking Heads album -- killer sonic grunge funneled through a very Burma-ish wall-of-noise guitar attack, but in the service of spirited and slightly goofy pop songs. I liked 'em so much I bought their single.

So tired I was starting to drool, I hiked back downtown to the Underworld just in time to catch **Busker Soundcheck**, a power trio from Chicago that I had been wanting to see for a while. Energetic and earnest, these guys plow through their set with all of the bounce (and none of the obnoxious swagger) of Material Issue.

Saturday, October 31

I spent the afternoon with Shawn doing Greenwich Village touristy things (he bought an empty CD jewel case at Venus Records and had to go back for the CD) and we spent the first part of the evening trying to maneuver around the Halloween Parade. The evening's festivities started back at the Lion's Den for **Sound Advice**, a group of NYU students who have been playing out around town. In the spirit of the holiday, the boys took the stage shirtless and covered in red and silver grease paint, with the lead singer bedecked in a tattered, scorched tee shirt to commemorate his roommate setting their dorm room on fire. The band's

sound is hard to describe, although they remind me a bit of the Misconceptions, another NYU band. Sort of la-la-la shoegazer melodies but without the dense guitar, more of a Depeche Mode kind of techno/pop sound, with an array of effects on the vocals. They seem to draw a lot of girls, which usually indicates a band that's going to do well. Shawn looked kind of stoned through their set, but he gets like that with any band that isn't on Dischord.

Next stop was **Tilt**, yet another new space for shows. The address on Varick Street was a little scary, but the place is only about two blocks south of Bleecker Street and a block west of Sixth Avenue, not hard to reach at all. When we arrived at Tilt, which is in an office building, there was a line of about 300 kids down the block. Uh oh. It turned out they were there for the show *upstairs* with Murphy's Law, which wasn't CMJ sponsored. Our badges got us into the downstairs club, which turned out to be a great big empty room almost the size of the Marquee. If that's the small size, I wonder how big the "big" room is!

Anyway, a slow trickle of generic youth in baseball caps and hooded sweatshirts slowly filled the room as we watched a success of Revelation Records' finest non-Krishna bands from around the country. First off were **Blindside**, a very young and not terribly interesting band who were still better than **Outface**,



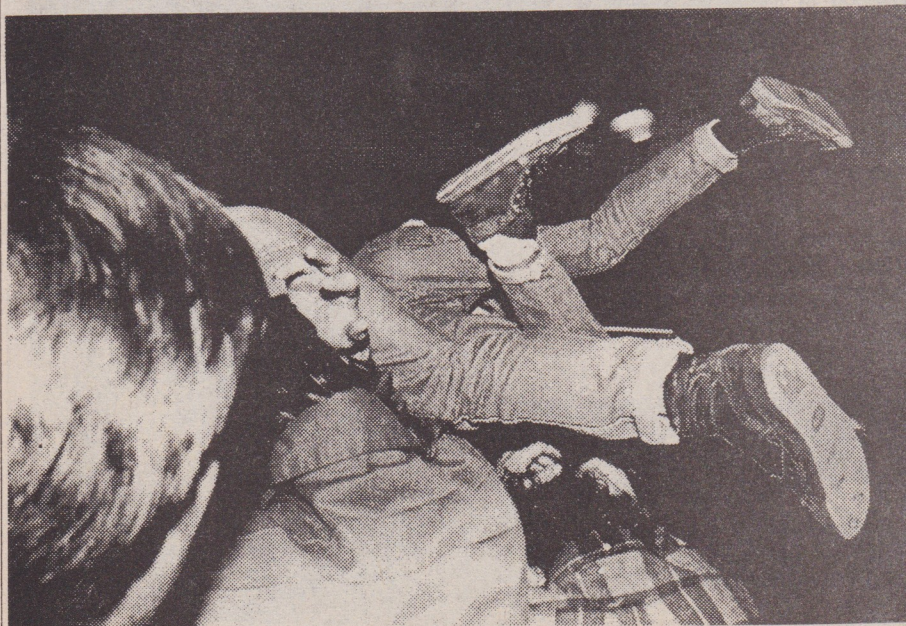
a very old and not terribly interesting band. Hailing from Cleveland, Outface apparently have been around forever (I heard that Naked Raygun used to open for *them*) although I can't figure out why, since they didn't have an original idea in their set, just a lot of overcooked speedmetal riffs. If I was thirtysomething and on Revelation Records, I'd seriously consider career counseling.

Fortunately, things got a lot better with **Farside**, one of the best new hardcore bands I've seen in a long time. The singer looks a bit like Tim Singer of No Escape. They must be good, Justine DeMetrick showed up to take photos of them.

Next up were **Iceburn**, who hold the record for the most consecutive appearances by a band in a photo in an ad in MRR (although the ad was for Victory Records, and now they're on Revelation. Whatever happened to unity?) Now a three-piece, the Melvins sound like the Monkees next to these mooks. It's just a good thing we were in the basement, these guys would've gone right through the floor if they were upstairs, that's how *heavy* they were. Kind of an unlikely looking band too - the singer's a grizzled older guy, the bassist could pass for 14, and the drummer looks like he belongs in Admiral. Sick, twisted, ugly, scary, *pounding* shit, these guys didn't play one song that was less than twenty minutes long. Whoa.



Farside was the coolest hardcore band at the convention; below, some fans demonstrate the latest dance craze, or maybe somebody dropped a wuarter... Photos by Shawn Scallen



BIG BROTHER



**IS WATCHING
YOU**

by Jim Testa

The first time I met Dave Smalley, I was standing on line at The Channel in Boston with my friend Dave Wykoff. We were waiting to get into some show, maybe Husker Du. This skinny blonde kid with an attitude bigger than the John Hancock building came walking up to us carrying a copy of the new D.Y.S. lp, which was hot off the presses, and showing it off to people in the crowd. "Who was that asshole?" I asked.

That wasn't the last time I ran into Dave Smalley. A couple of years later, after his stint in the D.C. all-star hardcore band Dag Nasty, he turned up as the singer for All, singing for the former Descendents after Milo had decided to leave music. That encounter was a lot different; Dave was warm, friendly, effusive, generous, and irresistibly likeable. We've been friends ever since, although we only get to chat on those rare occasions when he's in my neck of the woods on tour.

When I heard that Smalley was coming to New York with the new lineup of Down By Law, I jumped at the chance to arrange an interview. After all, in the pantheon of punk rock, DYS was every bit as influential as Minor Threat, Black Flag and the Dead Kennedys. Originally from the same D.C. suburbs that spawned Minor Threat, Scream, and the original D.C. hardcore scene, Smalley moved to Boston to attend school and started DYS. He still has a bit of a Southern accent from his boyhood in Virginia.

When New York's hardcore scene went straightedge in the mid-80's, it was DYS's wolfpack posse - hooded sweatshirts, emo lyrics, and sweaty, athletic stage moves - that set the style for Youth Of Today and that whole generation of bands.

The current lineup of Down By Law reunites Dave with Colin Sears of Dag Nasty on

Dave Smalley

D.Y.S.

Dag
Nasty

ALL



down by law

drums, along with Pat Hoed on bass and Mark Philips on guitar. As you'll read, this lineup seems set for a while, at least, and judging by their December appearance at CBGB, they're every bit as rockin' as Dave's former bands.

I had a lot of questions for Smalley, one of the few founding members of the American hardcore movement who hasn't sold out, gone metal, or given up his original ideals. Here's what he had to say....

Q: Since you're here to publicize the new Down By Law record, let's start with that. The new record strikes me as a lot more completely realized than the first one. I thought the first record you did sounded thrown together.

Dave: I think the new record's a lot better too. With the first record, we started as a project band. It wasn't really gonna be like a real band, making records and touring, it was just gonna be a fun thing. I knew Dave Naz because All had played with Chemical People a few times, and Dave and I had become good friends. So we just started jamming together, because I had written a couple of songs, like "Down The Drain," and I just wanted to hear what they would sound like with a band. So I would go over to his house, hang out, and we'd jam in the practice space behind his house. Then Ed from Chemical People starting playing with us, and then Jamie from Chemical People, and it was all still really loose. Then Brett (Gurwitz, of Bad Religion and Epitaph Records) saw us play this small show and really liked us a lot, and he was like, "I'm going to sign you guys." So we did it, and I think... it wasn't really thrown together, but it was a little less of a real thing for us. So it probably wasn't the best record we could've made.

Now the new lineup is very much a real thing. It's full-time. It's us four guys who are only in one band. It's a lot better and I think it's getting better all the time.

Q: I think also when you get to play songs out live before recording them, it always helps.

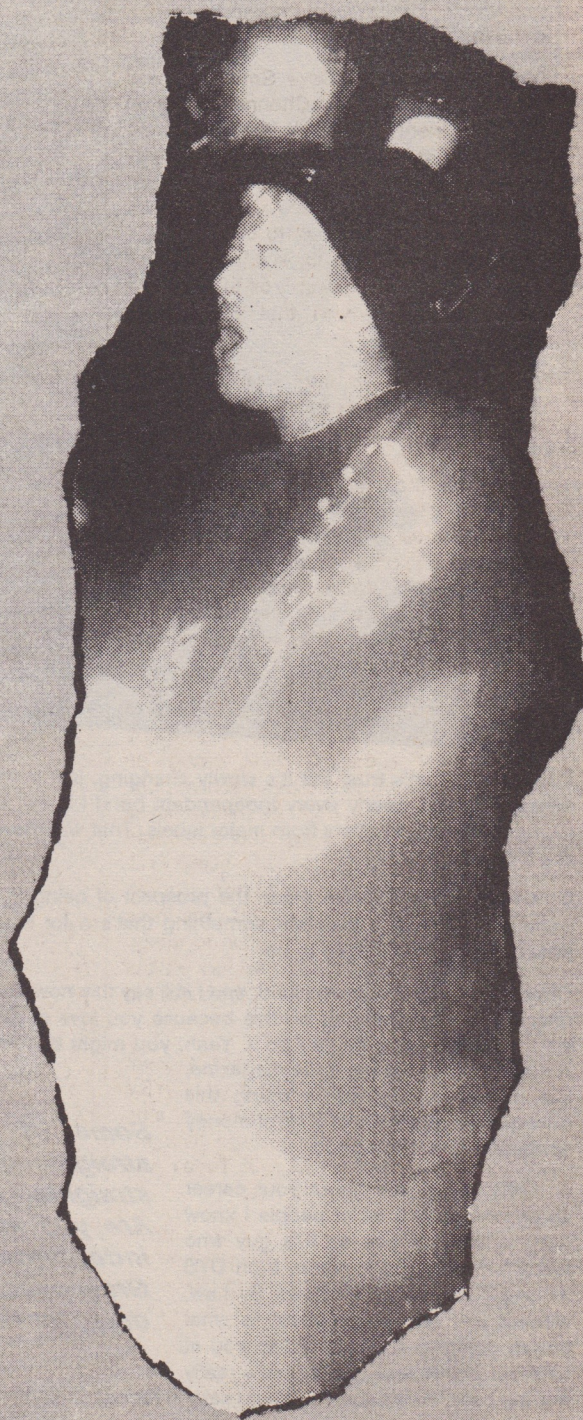
Dave: Yes, definitely. A lot of people probably don't realize that, but it's true.

Talk turns to Nirvana, whose drummer Dave Grohl used to be in Scream and shares what Smalley calls "the incestuous D.C. connection."

Q: A lot of people thought that when Nirvana sold all those records, it was really going to change the world and change the way people bought records and accepted new bands. But you're out there on the road, has anything really changed?

Dave: No, it hasn't. And I don't think any band can really change the world. I used to think that. But I do think they can make a dent. If anything, at least kids will grow up and instead of trying to be Bon Jovi, they'll try and be Nirvana. Which I think is a good thing. Or maybe they'll read a Nirvana interview and someone will mention Scream, and they'll go check them out. And Scream was an amazing D.C. band.

Q: The weird thing about the Nirvana record was that all kinds of kids bought it, whether they were into dance music or heavy metal or Top 40. But those same kids don't seem to be going out and buying lots of new stuff anymore.





Down By Law photos by Jim Testa

Dave: Yeah, that's true, but it's slowly changing, just in the sense that now, nearly every independent band I know, us included, is getting offers from major labels. That was never like that before.

Q: It does seem to have made the prospect of being in a band and making it a career something that's a lot more possible now than it used to be.

Dave: Yeah, but I've always said, and I still say this now, that after a certain point, you do this because you love it. And it's fun. And that's why you do it. Yeah, you might become Nirvana or the next big indie magazine, but neither one of us is doing this because we might make a lot of money someday. And that's good.

Q: Let's talk a little about your career so far. Because a lot of people I know tend to think of you as this guy who just flits from band to band, from DYS to Dag Nasty to All to Down By Law, without any real commitment to what you're doing. But I've talked to you at different points and I know that's really not the case, so maybe you could set the record straight.

Dave: That's been a problem. It really has been, I admit it. And a few reviews of the first Down By Law record even said, like, "This is a really good record, I like it, gee, I wonder what his next band is gonna be?" But there have been circumstances with each one. DYS was just becoming silly by the end. That's why I left that. Dag Nasty, I got a chance to go to college for free, so I left for that. And then in All, I had never been in a band that toured so much. Even in

Dag Nasty, all we ever did was a midwest tour with the Descendents. All was really an eye opener. It was, Holy Guacamole. I looked back after the first year and it was like, I have just been on the road for nine months, I have been living in a van with these four guys for nine months of my life. It was great, and I loved it. I was committed to it, and I loved it, but I just couldn't handle their touring.

Now this band is musically and spiritually and practically the thing I'm really ready for now. Hopefully there aren't huge surprises for me in my future anymore. I'm a musician, this is what I do. Before, it was always like, well...I'm in a

Some of the straightedge kids have said, "I'm straightedge," period. And that's it. Well, okay, you're straightedge, but what else are you doing for the world? Are you making music or writing or helping put out independent records? You can give money to Greenpeace, any number of things. But what are you doing for the world besides being straightedge?

band, but I want to go to school, and my parents want me to work for the Post Office.

Now, I'm a musician. This is what I do. I'm married to a wonderful woman, Caroline, and she says, go for it, I want you to do what you want to do. So this band, for better or worse, we're gonna stay with it. This will be it.

Q: I didn't even know you were married.

Dave: Yeah, I got married one year ago.

Q: Does that make touring harder?

Dave: In some ways it makes it harder, but in other ways, it's easier. I was dating a girl for a long time when I was in All, and that was even harder. Because we weren't as close, and there were all these questions. She'd always say, oh, are you seeing other girls on the road? Whereas my wife Caroline, she's my best friend, and she knows I don't do that stuff on the road. It's a very supportive thing. So...it's great. It makes it hard to be away, but because we're so close, it just makes it easier.

Q: What's it like being a band on Epitaph? Because from my point of view, I think the label is really underappreciated, in terms of doing things very professionally and yet keeping a real punk rock spirit about the music they decide to release...

Dave: It's really good. I was just saying in another interview that Epitaph and Dischord are the two best labels in America. Sub-Pop too, I like a lot of stuff on Sub-Pop. But in terms of working with labels, in cases where I know firsthand how they work, those are the two best labels. They both have honest people working for them, they work their butts off, they don't make a lot of money. They do well, they sell a lot of records, but everything they make goes back into the label. If Brett Gurtz drives a nice car, he doesn't own that car because of Epitaph, he owns it because Bad Religion does very well. And even there, half of what Bad Religion makes goes back into the label.

Q: Epitaph seems to get a lot of shit about being corporate and sellouts but from my dealings with them, I think that's

unjust.

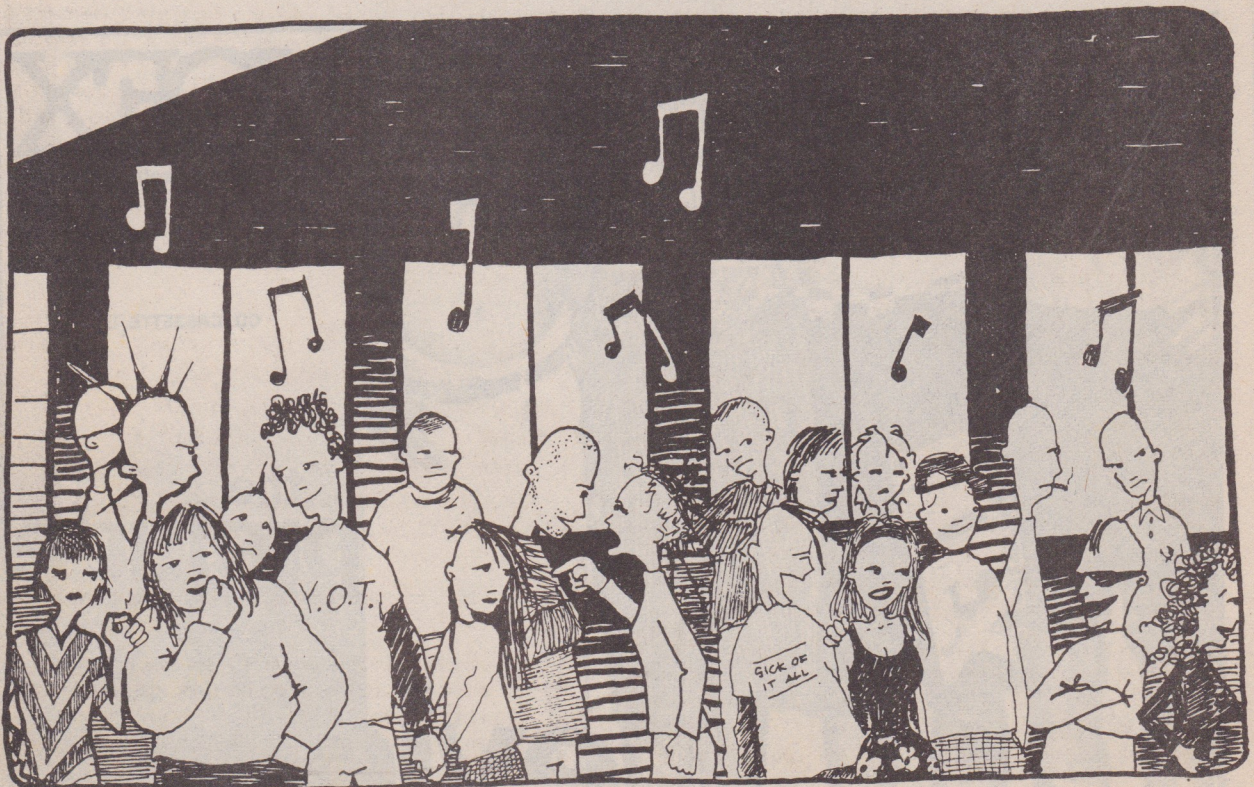
Like Dischord, they seem to really have their act together in terms of running a business, and yet they haven't sacrificed their idealism in terms of the music.

Dave: That's exactly it. They run it intelligently, and for that, the anarchist punk rockers will never let them alone.

And when I say that, I'm not trying to diss any other labels. Like, Lookout is a great label. New Red Archives is a great label, Nikky Garrett is a friend of mine, he puts out some great bands like Samiam. But those people at Epitaph, they could be doing a lot of things that would make them more money. They're all very nice people, and they could all get jobs at any major label, no problem, and make \$40,000 a year. But they don't do that, because they believe in what they're doing.

Q: I thought it might be fun if I read you a few things from some other interviews and ask you to react to them. This first piece is from Lester Bangs, something we ran in the 10th anniversary issues, from an interview he did just before he died: "I never thought being a teenager was absolutely the coolest thing you can be. I was pretty unhappy when I was a teenager. All these people who say 'teenage rock 'n roll,' as if that's the only thing it's about, celebrating your adolescence... There's other things. You bring rock 'n roll into life. I think rock 'n roll is better when it reaches into those things. One reason I like the Velvet Underground is because it's real adult music."

Now you're not 16 anymore, you must think about this sometimes. How do you feel about it?



Dave: First of all, that's a great quote. And especially referring to the Velvet Underground like that. Because it's not cool to admit this, but I'm the first to admit that when I was a punk rocker in high school, I thought the Velvet Underground was kinda cool, but it didn't make my soul move. What made my soul move was Minor Threat or the Clash or the Dead Kennedys. And now, boy, I love Minor Threat still, but I don't have a Minor Threat tape on tour with us in the van. But I do have VU. I really say what he's saying about the adult thing. It's interesting to see certain people in music, or in writing, certain people get better as they get older and certain people don't. Hopefully, I'm one of the people who does get better. Hopefully, I'm still growing. I think when you get older, you stop worrying about the adolescent stuff. I don't worry anymore about whether girls like me, because I have a wife now, it's not what I'm doing music for. Whereas when I was in DYS, it was always like, I wonder if Susie's gonna be there at the gig tonight. You know?

So yeah, I think as you get older, if you develop and you still care, and you keep your ideals, and you're still gaining experience, and it becomes a better thing. You have so much more to draw on, you become more reflective and more thoughtful, and hopefully you never lost that inner

thing that got you into music in the first place. So you got the good part of that adolescent idealism, but you're not just in music so you can scream a couple of angry lines.

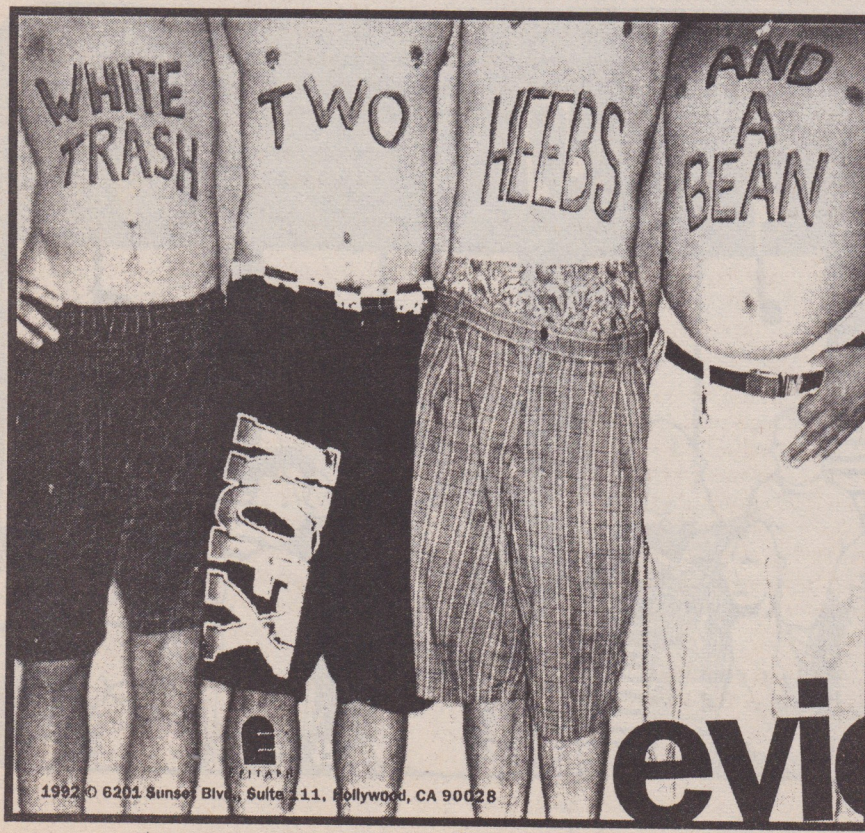
Q: One of the things about the kind of music you do is that, every year you go out on the road a year older, but the

audience is always the same stage. Every year, it's another bunch of teenagers who come into the scene, and all of last year's kids move on the something else. That seems to be the way

I think as you get older, if you develop and you still care, and you keep your ideals, and you're still gaining experience, and it becomes a better thing. You have so much more to draw on, you become more reflective and more thoughtful, and hopefully you never lost that inner thing that got you into music in the first place. So you got the good part of that adolescent idealism, but you're not just in music so you can scream a couple of angry lines.

hardcore goes. The only ones who stick around are the guys in bands or people like me.

Dave: It's kind of weird sometimes. The weirdest thing is when I see little kids in DYS letterman jackets. And these kids are like 15 years old, and they've got the vinyl sleeves with DYS embroidered on their jackets, and they look like me ten years ago. And I look at that and that weirds me out.



NOFX
white trash, two heebes and a bean

CD, CASSETTE, LP

the
prelude
to
your
eviction

1992 © 6201 Sunset Blvd., Suite 111, Hollywood, CA 90028

A., how did they get that look, and B, am I getting old? But for me, I think it's getting better with age.

Besides, I'm still pretty young. I'm still twentysomething. But I hope even when we're thirtysomething... Our live show is really intense. That's why we do it. Part of being on the road and not being with your girlfriend or wife, a lot of that passion that you would share with them spills out into your music. That's one thing I've noticed. I'm so wired now when we play.

Q: One thing I like about staying in the punk scene is the way you feel when you meet a really bright kid, whether it's someone in a band or doing a fanzine, or just some kid who goes to shows. It gives you a lot of hope.

Dave: It really does. The greatest thing about this tour, I have to say, has been meeting kids. Meeting really cool people, or meeting people from years ago who are still into it. All of that, it's like, whoa, we really have established something. This isn't going to die away, it isn't just a fad. It's a way of life, and it's a way of looking at the world. And it's a way of living your life differently from the way your parents lived theirs. And that's great. And it's real. It's there. We're doing it. You know your next issue is going to come out. I know I'm going to make a new record with my friends, and it's going to be a good one. None of these things existed before punk rock, it was all corporations.

Q: Let's go back in time a bit. Most people think of you as coming from Boston, but I know you grew up in Virginia, near D.C. Someone I know says you dated his sister when you were at Bishop O'Connell High School.

Dave: Oh wow. I probably did. But I went to Bishop Ireton. We used to be really jealous of the kids from O'Connell because that was a coed Catholic school and our school was all boys.

Q: Yeah, I made the observation to this guy that you couldn't pick more perfect training for a life in the hardcore scene that going to a Catholic boys school. That's kind of what the whole thing turned into.

Dave: (laughs) I don't think I would have gotten so into punk rock if I hadn't gone to a Catholic boys high school. It really inspires you. Although I loved my high school. I was one of those weird guys who thought his school was a very special place. And it's going to sound weird to say this, but I think the fact that it was all boys, we all... It was almost like that movie Dead Poets Society. It wasn't that preppy and snooty but we had that kind of bonding experience, to the point where, none of those guys are musicians but we're all still really good friends.

A lot of people think I'm from Boston. And I was very proud to be part of that early Boston hardcore scene. But I was very much a D.C. person.

Q: So I guess the whole straightedge thing really comes from D.C.?

Dave: Yeah, it really did. Although bands like SSD and DYS really did help spread the word. It's word, I think in some ways DYS has even more of a cult than Minor Threat in a way, because Minor Threat was huge, much bigger in terms of record sales, but DYS has the hardcore straightedge cult, and they always will. And I'm happy about that. I believe in it still, I always will.

Q: I vividly remember when all those straightedge kids from Connecticut like Ray Cappo and that crew came into New York and took over the hardcore scene here. And the funny thing is, all those kids looked like you.

Dave: Yeah, and I don't mind that so much. It's a nice honor, it's a sign of respect. As long as they're trying to do something original too. Go ahead and dress like that, or get the fist with the X tattoo, that's fine. That's kind of like a bonding thing. I still believe in that and they believe in it, so we're kind of a family, spiritually. But then do something with that. That's always been my point. Some of the

The greatest thing about this tour, I have to say, has been meeting kids. Meeting really cool people, or meeting people from years ago who are still into it. All of that, it's like, whoa, we really have established something. This isn't going to die away, it isn't just a fad. It's a way of life, and it's a way of looking at the world. And it's a way of living your life differently from the way your parents lived theirs. And that's great. And it's real. It's there. We're doing it.

straightedge kids have said, "I'm straightedge," period. And that's it. Well, okay, you're straightedge, but what else are you doing for the world? Are you making music or writing or helping put out independent records? You can give money to Greenpeace, any number of things. But what are you doing for the world besides being straightedge?

Q: Unfortunately in New York, mostly what they did was beat up kids who weren't straightedge.

Dave: I had a problem with the NY straightedge scene, the guys in Judge and John Porcell and those guys. To some extent, they were taking something that was ideally a very beautiful, positive way of living, and kind of making it a hateful thing. And I never liked that at all.

Q: Let me read you something else, this is something Stephen from the False Prophets said in an interview, about the NY straightedgers back around 1985 or so. This is probably the first time you've ever been compared to Bruce Springsteen, by the way: "The reason Bruce Springsteen sells so many records like Bruce Springsteen out there, guys who share those same hopes and dreams. That's what those straight edge bands were selling. I'm not going to say they only promoted right-wing ideals, that would be foolish. What they promoted is traditional middle class values... I used to call these kids milk-and-cookie skinheads. That was their style. They liked to wolfpack, looking tough, but inside they were just... You know what they're going to be? They're going to be Teamsters when they grow up, the kind of blue collar guys you can sit with and have a Bud."

Dave: Whoa. That's pretty harsh. I don't think that's true. I do think, if you want to use that term middle class values in a derogatory way, I do have certain values. I don't want to

hurt anybody. I wish the world were clean and free of racial consciousness, and free of sexism. And I'm married, and I have a cat. Yeah, there are things I believe in. I'm not an anarchist. I never was and never will be. I think you need a government, you need a state...the world, the way it is, you even need the place. But straightedge is not the Archie Bunker mentality. It's just a way of living your life so you can go on a different way.

I've never had the problem, luckily, of getting so fucked up that I never knew where I was. But if someone else wants to drink a beer, so? Drink a beer. Who's to say that's wrong? It was never meant to be a fascist thing.

Q: Well, as you said, the New York scene really perverted the original message. Literally, in those days, every single Sunday at the CBGB hardcore matinees, some kid would leave in an ambulance.

Dave: That's crazy.

Q: It always seemed to me that they took the idea of straightedge and they turned it into a really bad college fraternity. The kind of frat where it didn't really matter so much who let in, it was who you got to keep out that was really important.

Dave: That's a great analogy. It's like that fanzine Vegan Reich. They have a fanzine but they won't sell it to anyone who's not a vegan. That's so fucked up. That's so fascistic and intolerant. But that's a great analogy, it was like a little boy's club.

Q: That's one nice thing about shows today in New York, at ABC No Rio. Women get to play a much larger role in the scene - in bands, or putting on the shows, or just showing up and being a part of what's going on. It's not like the CBGB days when the only reason a girl came to a show was to hold her boyfriend's jacket while he went into the pit and moshed.

Dave: That's funny, but it's true. I used to do that with my girlfriend, hold my jacket while I mosh. But I fully support what's going on today. Girls have been kept out of the music scene for a long time, either directly or indirectly.

Q: So on this tour, have you seen this new post-Lollapalooze slamdancing, with passing the kids overhead every 5 seconds and everything?

Dave: Oh yeah, definitely. But we're lucky, it's not so much for us. That's one of the reasons we like being on an independent label. Our fans are our fans. They come to see Down By Law, they don't come because they heard it was some new band that sounds like Pearl Jam. They like melodic punk, or whatever it is we do, so they're fans, and they're part of the thing. Unlike the fraternity guys who just show up at shows so they can try out slamdancing like they saw on MTV and don't know anything about the music.

Q: I think it's worse when you get that attitude like, I only support Dischord bands, or I only support Revelation bands, or whatever.

Dave: Yeah, sure. I welcome however many people who want to buy our records and come to our shows. We're trying our hardest and you're hopefully supporting a good band. But don't come see us just because we're an Epitaph band. Come see us because you've heard us or because you've heard good things about us.

Q: It's nice that catchy bands like the Epitaph bands or some of the Lookout bands are cool again, now that the whole angry thrash Agnostic Front/Sick Of It All scene has pretty much died out.

Dave: Oh definitely. I think Sugar's a good example of that too. They're new album is great and it's really melodic. I was so happy to see Bob Mould come back and do a great album like that, because I've been friends with him for so long.

Q: Now I bet that's something most people wouldn't suspect, that Dave Smalley and Bob Mould are friends. It must go back to early Husker Du, right?

Dave: Yeah, in fact, here's a little bit of trivia most people don't know, but Husker Du do the backup vocals on "Wolfpack." They're part of the crowd yelling "Wolfpack!" in the background. They were playing in town and hanging out at that studio, Radiobeat, where we recorded. So we asked them if they wanted to come into our session and yell on our record. And they thought it was funny, because they drank beer and I mean, they totally weren't straightedge. But we were friends. And Bob Mould is another good example of what we were talking about before, about getting better with age. His best work is now. There is a kind of thing that matures and gets better, and I think that's a good thing if you can do that and keep at it.



cassette culture

by Rodney Leighton

Welcome to another edition of the column all about audio tapes, emanating from deep in the woods of Nova Scotia. It's winter up here as I write this, dammit! Snow all over everything. Ugh!

BUSKER SOUNDCHECK "Dose" A full-length cassette of rock-tinged pop originals. It's good stuff, I've listened to it four or five times and will save it for future listens. My fave number is "Beautiful Brownhaired Girl." (PO Box 338, Lemont IL 60439)

TAINTED ANGEL "A Little Heaven" Well! A strange review from me. I rarely use comparisons.. I am by no means a fan of Guns N Roses and I think Axl Rose is a spoiled brat who needs a good spanking. But about the third time I listened to this tape, I thought, "Christ, this guy sounds like Axl Rose." The more I listened, the more I thought it was GNR. The strange this is, I loved it! (AMF, PO Box 42-2762, Kissimmee FL 34742)

OCTOBER PROJECT Hell, almost a perfect demo! Three songs, each a bit different but all great. Seems they put out two demos at once (where's the other one?) This one was recorded "live" at Noise New Jersey, home of Shimmydisc. The band consists of fantastic vocalist Mary Fahl and four other folks. If I lived in the area, I'd go see them! (PO Box 1214, New York NY 10101)

FOOTSTONE "Moss" Formerly known as Stickman, this five-man band plays music with tints of pop, rock and punk, all with an experimental feel. Played it 5 times and I can't come up with anything more substantial than that. Sorry. (78 Stony Lane, Short Hills NJ 07078)

RUBBER SOLE "8 Songs You Haven't Heard" I guess they're a commercial band, since there's no address on the cassette. Hardly long enough to be a commercial release at 18 minutes. Pretty good stuff, though. Definitely pop, but sung fast. Thrash punk pop?

THE ACCIDENTS That's Phil Yanos, who's been friends with partner Kip Harris since childhood. The band had been playing 8 months as of October, '92. They sound like they'd put on a good show. A decent pop demo, with "Patrice" the best cut. Of course it's the last one on the tape. (204 W 108 St, New York NY 10025)

UNCLE DAD A four-member pop band with various funky jazz tints. Maybe there's something wrong with my musical preferences: "Teresa" is my favorite of these three songs and it's the last song on this tape. (25 Thompson St #5, New York NY 10013)

STEP ON A CRACK A great 15 band/song compilation of true indie bands from NYC, released by Sound Views magazine. Wide ranging, from folk to grunge. No really bad numbers and some excellent ones. A great way to explore part of the indie music scene. Some of the best tracks:

Brothers By Choice, "Inside You" -- good funky rock. Mark Johnson, "Real True Lover" -- great pop song, lotsa fun. Third Eye Butterfly, "Clouded Eyes" -- lovely poppy punk.

Styve, "Melora" -- a ballad, something like Leonard Cohen would write. A highly recommended compilation. (Sound Views, 96 Henry St #5W, Brooklyn Hts, NY 11201)



Gossamer

GOSSAMER Promo/demo. Of what, I ain't too sure. The note says it was recorded in 15 hours, apparently in one sitting. It's a conglomerate of spoken word bits, instrumentals, experimental stuff, and fairly decent punk rock. (11740 81st Place No, Seminole FL 34642)

THE RAILS "Wonderful" An aptly titled release by

two former members of The Astorians. All original songs, recorded in songwriter Fred Wilhelm's living room, the tape sounds completely professional. The music is beautiful, lovely pop, laden with thoughtful lyrics and top-notch instrumentation. An excellent release. (Peg N Hole, 124 North St 2nd Fl, Williamsburg, NY 11211)

THROTTLE BODY "For The Few" Goshwow! as the SF fans would say. This is a demo tape, but forget the tape for the moment - the packaging is unreal! The promo material is in a booklet which is almost a small zine in itself. The lyrics come in their own mini-booklet, handwritten by some gal who uses a symbol for a name. The tape package, created by Thom Whalen, is a cardboard box, with one side indented to hold the tape and 3 foldover sides plus a flap to insert into a slot to hold it all together. It's an interesting design overall but the inside is amazing - each side is a mural. There's no other word for these drawings, which I can best describe as a cross between ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics and the pictures in a futuristic sci-fi magazine. Obviously hand-crafted, beautiful, intriguing, fascinating,



The Accidents

and unique. What? Oh, the tape... Four decent pop/rock songs with a bit of a punk feel. Not bad but nothing to blow your socks off. (Really Real Music, 12062 10th Ave So, Seattle WA 98168)

THE NOW "Muse" Peter Gaines is a one-man show, so they say. Experimental type pop. One song is entitled "You Ain't Funky," but it sounds like he's singing, "You ain't fucking." I know the feeling. (179 Prospect Ave, Wood Dale IL 60191)

FUN HOUSE: The Collection If I was doing this for Mykel Board's zine, I'd have to mention all 15 bands on this compilation. Luckily I'm not, but I hope Mykel got a copy of this, because there's a lot of scum rock on it. Along with a lot of punk, rap, thrash... hell, a little bit of everything. Side A was only so so, but Side B was much better, starting off with The Stepchildren and "Twistin'," a great scum-rock tune. Enrique comes up with a cool humor piece, Heru Ra Ha sings about a gal who gives great head in "Headgirl," and Toxic Sloths do a sort of rap thing called "Homeboy." My favorite line of the tape: "I don't know what I'm saying/but hell, I'm here, so keep playing," from "Chili Sauce" by The Corleones. (Diamante Negro, PO Box 641312, San Jose CA 95164)

That does it for another edition of Cassette Culture. Cassettes for review in this column can be sent directly to Rodney Leighton, RR #3, Pugwash, Nova Scotia CANADA B0K 1L0. I love tapes; I also love CD's. Vinyl albums don't fit in my mailbox and singles are the invention of the devil to drive reviewers crazy. I have several other review projects besides this one, including a zine of my own. So send those tapes, CD's, videos, books, and t-shirts. - Rod Leighton

OUT NOW.

FRIENDZ

SEND 2 STAMPS FOR OUR
EXCLUSIVE MAIL-ORDER CATALOG

ALL PRICES ARE PPD.

• 14 NEW SONGS • WACT • LP/CD/CASS •

• LP/CASS \$8 CD \$12 • ALSO AVAILABLE: 'DEAD END' \$3

• FOREFRONT RECORDS: PO BOX • 1964 • HOBOKEN, NJ. 07030-1308

by Jim Testa

*Let's face it, I've always been a sucker for a great hook. So when I started to read about EMF in the British press, I was stoked, and by the time "Unbelievable" became a chart hit here in the U.S., I was already a fan with two live shows under my belt. A lot of people - especially rock critics - dismissed EMF as teenybopper darlings, the flavor of the month in Vision skate gear. But the songs on **Schubert Dip**, the band's first album, were just too well-written for me to diss these guys as no-talent one-hit wonders.*

*After the initial euphoria (or should I say Ecstasy) of "Unbelievable" wore off, there were the techno remixes, the band's new image -- all tattoos and dreads -- and the "Unexplained" EP, which introduced a much rougher, rockier and less dance-oriented sound, including a wild rave-up re-do of Iggy & The Stooges' "Search & Destroy." That was followed by EMF's second album, **Stigma**, which like so many other sophomore efforts last year failed to recapture the buzz the band enjoyed with their debut. Still, I wanted to meet the man who wrote "Unbelievable" and all those other unbelievably hooky EMF tunes - Ian Dench, the band's hawk-nosed guitarist and songwriter. And when the band came to New York to play *The Bank* as part of their most recent U.S. tour, I got my chance...*

Q: Let's start out with why you're touring the U.S. and playing clubs instead of larger venues... I understand you did the same sort of thing in England and enjoyed it?

Ian: For the "Unexplained" EP we did the smaller places, and then for the album we did the larger places. And yeah, it was great to play where you can see the people. They're right in your face. Of course it's great when you play the bigger places too because when you have that many people going nuts, it's great. But somehow you always

feel a little distant, they're out there somehow...

Q: I've been in *The Bank* when it's crowded and it's not very comfortable. I think it's going to be a pretty wild night tonight.

Ian: Yeahhh. It'll be sweaty, you know? It will be manic.

Q: I was a little surprised over the reaction that *Stigma* got in the English press, most of the reviews I saw were pretty positive. Were you cringing in anticipation of the reviews, knowing how they like to turn on last year's favorites?

Ian: The weeklies are notoriously fickle and they weren't quite so enamored with the album, but the monthlies and the more serious music press all understood it and saw that there was something a little deeper going on there. And that we were kind of finding ourselves and having to struggle a bit. And we were nervous about how people would greet it, because the press was going to be quite important to this album. There aren't a lot of obvious radio hits on this one like there was on the first one, and we knew it was going to be

a hard slog. But basically we're happy, because we're happy with the way the album turned out. We like what we did and we like doing something more...sensitive, and doing our own thing. We knew we weren't going to have a lot of big hits with this album but that's okay.

Q: I got to meet Derry (the keyboardist) a while ago and I asked him what exactly he did in the band, and his answer was "as little as possible." He went on at great length about how much you actually do in terms of writing and arranging the songs and putting everything together.

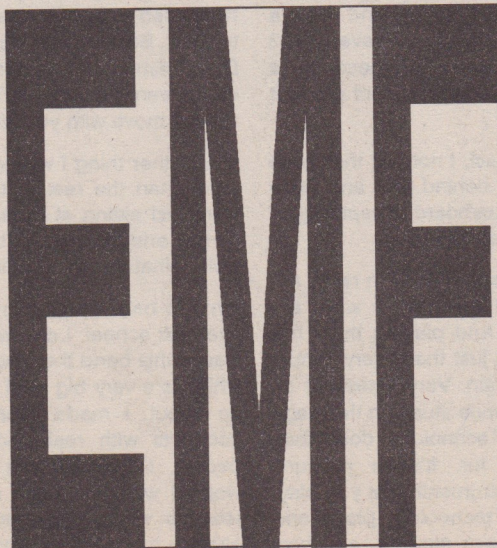
Ian: Sometimes people say to me, "you are the mastermind behind it and you write all the songs," but that's making my role bigger than it really is. Because we are a band after all, and even though Derry will admit to not doing a great deal of work, his influence is very important. The thing about a band is that it's personalities. You have five people working, and if it was five boffins like me then it would be a nightmare. We wouldn't get anything done. But



This is Ian Dench

He is a genius.

Write that down.



because I am the sort of formal element and do the slog work, and I go off on these wild tangents sometimes. And they're great, because they stop me and keep me from doing anything boring. Derry will turn up fresh and maybe he couldn't be bothered to turn up for a couple of rehearsals, and then he'll come in and hear something that I've been bogged down with and he'll just sort it all out. Like he'll say, just do it faster or something. And it's like, yeah! That'll work. So he's very, very important. And he does work. He does all the sampling, and he'll turn up with loads of funny noises. He'll come in with some new sample and say, this'll be good for this song, and I'll say, but you haven't heard this song yet, and he'll say, never mind, it's a good sound, it's a good sound. And these things just kind of work out.

Q: Do you ever feel underappreciated?

Ian: No. I get more money than everybody else, and that makes it much easier to take. And I feel it's justified, because I do put more work in basically. The thing is, it's really important for me to give credit where it's due, and to nurture input and enthusiasm. And we are writing more as a

we're contemporary. When people say, why don't you have someone play the keyboard parts? it really infuriates me, because they're being so dense, and have no idea about what's happening now in music. You hear dance records now that people make in the bedrooms, and it's all sequencers. Nobody plays anything. And it's wonderful, wonderful things. Technology is wonderful for reproducing those sort of rigid, monotonous things, layering up all these unusual electronic sounds. I'm taking some of that and putting it with all the things that are fucking brilliant about traditional rock. Punk rock, that I love so much.

Q: Doesn't working with a tape limit what you can do on stage, though? I mean, you can't play slower or faster, you have to keep the same time, and you can't switch the set list around...

Ian: No, no, we can change the set list at the last minute. Playing slow or fast is another matter. But having said that, anybody who plays a song will always play the song at the same tempo. The same tempo is as much a part of a song as the chord changes. Yes, it's sad that we can't kind of jam on things longer or some things shorter. But sometimes



band. Everyone is understanding the process a whole lot more, from writing to recording to promoting and touring. And because we've been through two albums now, everyone sort of understands how it all works. And that's a very good thing for the band. Of course, if you have É3VÉ3 è five people writing together it sometimes becomes a mess, you really need a personal vision to sort of guide it along.

Q: When I've seen you tour in the past, I noticed that there were a lot of keyboard parts playing behind you, and since Derry doesn't do anything with his keyboard except trigger samples, I assume you play with a backing tape.

Ian: The thing about the keyboard parts is that I'm really not a very good keyboard player, and the parts I write are sequences, which are very simple. And playing them live can be very boring, because they're just these very simple phrases repeated over and over again. Very incessant on the beat things. You don't want someone stuck on the stage doing that, it's kind of pointless. Technology does that, that's what you use technology for. It's to produce sequences and stuff. We play the instruments that you play, and technology plays the parts that technology plays, and you work it together. That's how we're modern, and how

we'll just throw something in. Like the other night, we were back for the encores and James said, "Okay, this is the end," and I started jamming on "The End," and it just happened to be in the same key as the song we were going to play. So we jammed on "The End" for a bit, and then Derry came in with the noises that cued the next song and off we went right into it. The limiting thing is that technology will not move with you, so we move around the technology.

Q: Another thing I was wondering about, you are a little bit older than the rest of the band. I can't imagine that you were just sitting at home for the last ten years waiting for James and Derry and those guys to come along and start EMF. What were you doing through the 80's.

Ian: I've been playing in bands since school, since before I even left school. I did two years of college, doing fine art. I was in this band that had a record deal with Virgin Records, which is a very big deal in England, and they totally fucked us about. I made every mistake in the book, I signed contracts with real dodgy characters, dreadful, dreadful people. I worked with producers I never should have worked with. So when it came to EMF, that's one of the reasons why we did so well so quickly. Because I had already made all the mistakes and knew what to do. Our

manager, our record company, I went straight to these people because I knew they could be trusted... So yeah, all those years, I was unemployed and struggling and never made a penny out of it. My parents were very good, they supported me for quite a bit.

Q: To be fair, those were very hard years in England. I imagine all your friends didn't have jobs either.

Ian: In a way, that was wonderful for music. Because all my friends were unemployed, and they were all in bands. We had guitars. It was quite a scene. It was kind of sad, really, when people started getting jobs. I lost all my friends. I could have got a job many a time, but I always would rather do the music. And in a way I was spoiled, because all those years I had time. We weren't playing all the time so I had time to write. Now, this whole thing is such a rollercoaster. I have so little time to write and work things out. So those early years were great training, that was my apprenticeship.

I got this letter from a girl and she said, "Tough! You thought we weren't going to like you anymore but I love it!" I thought that was brilliant, because she saw our aversion to that kind of teenybopper adulation and yet she still liked what we were trying to do with the new album. And I'll tell you the truth, no matter how young or girly or screamie they are, I love them.

Q: You paid all those dues and the other guys in EMF more or less got a free ride.

Ian: In a sense, yes, they were spoiled. But that's not really fair, because they've worked really hard to. But they were that much younger, so they didn't have to struggle for that long. So in a way they were spoiled, like that first tour of America, every show sold out, and "Unbelievable" went to number one. Although I think we all felt very uncomfortable with some of the more facile pop elements that we endured then, top 40 radio and some of the magazines. It all sort of grated, it never felt right. I think doing something like Stigma was a reaction to that. Sometimes it's hard, not having that sort of glamorous success all the time, it's suddenly kind of different. But we're happier doing music anyway so it's all right.

Q: Before you came to the U.S. for the first time, it was far from a sure thing that you were going to be a big hit. There have been a lot of bands who have been huge in England and haven't really caught on here, like Happy Mondays or the Senseless Things...

Ian: Or Carter USM. Carter is HUGE in England.

Q: Right, they're really bigger than you in England, no?

Ian: Yes, totally. The thing about Carter is that they're indigenous, there are a lot of London references in their songs and I don't think a lot of Americans know what they're talking about. I think our subject matter is more universal, more emotional or more personal, and I think that's why we've caught on with American audiences more.

Q: Well, you also had that big hit single, which probably had something to do with it.

Ian: (smiling broadly) Yes, that did help quite a bit.

Q: I know that when your people were first publicizing Schubert Dip here in the States, they were very careful about what kind of publicity you got. Like, they tried to sell you to the alternative press and fanzines but they also tried very hard to keep you out of the teen magazines.

Ian: Yes, absolutely. We had made some mistakes like that in England. We didn't have a clue, we didn't have the confidence to say no to anybody. And I'd never been that successful so I didn't know what to expect. And something like Smash Hits, which is the big teen magazine in England, had always done articles on the most fashionable, the most underground of bands. So they asked us and we were like,



EMF photos by Jim Testa

yeah, it's cool, let's do something for them. But the bastards ran this article, or rewrites of it, and the same photographs, again and again. They ran the same fucking thing for six months. And we hated it, we never wanted to have that much exposure from those people. So when we came to America, it was, no teen mags, they'll fuck us over again. And anyway, it wants to answer questions like what's your favorite color, or what do you mum and dad do? It's got nothing to do with what we do! It's actually gotten kind of funny now because with this new record, the teen magazines are leaving us alone because we don't have that kind of profile anymore. But sometimes we get these letters, like I got this letter from a girl and she said, "Tough! You thought we weren't going to like you anymore but I love it!" I thought that was brilliant, because she saw our aversion to that kind of teenybopper adulation and yet she still liked what we were trying to do with the new album. And I'll tell you the truth, no matter how young or girly or screamy they are, I love them. The other bullet you ducked with the first record was the association with Ecstasy and the whole English rave drug culture. Given the drug paranoia in this country, that could have really hurt you.

Ian: That was mostly luck here. The press just didn't catch on. Because in England, god, we had a huge front-page headline in one of the tabloids, "In The Grip Of Ian" with a picture of James. And it was this bloody picture, you know how you look when the flash goes off and your eyes are half closed? It was this bloody awful picture of James and he looked totally zonked out. And then we were tagged with this Ecstasy thing, which was just ridiculous. As if people would just take Ecstasy because we have an "E" in our name. When we wrote that song ["EMF," whose chorus went, "E is for Ecstasy, M is for mother fucker"] I had never

even done Ecstasy. It was just a buzzword for the time. Subsequently, I have done it. And now, it's just ridiculous. In the beginning of the epidemic, people in England actually stopped drinking and just started taking E because it was so trendy. It was massive. And in a way, it was wonderful, because it's a love drug, basically, and people stopped fighting at clubs and started hugging. But then it got out of hand, the dealers moved in and started cutting it with cocaine and all kinds of horrible things. A friend of mine went into coma after he took some bad E.

Q: I just read an article in The Face, I think, about how to recognize real Ecstasy and how to spot the dangerous stuff. The same thing happened here with acid in the 60's.

Ian: That's the whole dangerous thing with drugs. You don't know what you're getting. There's a load of sharks involved who'll do anything for a little money. And it's so, so sad. I don't really endorse drugs, because it can be very, very dangerous. But "Just say no" is not a way to live life. You can't live your life that way. You've got to experiment and try things. I've had some very interesting experiences. But that whole thing about talking about drugs on our records, some people might take that wrong, especially younger people. You have to know what you're doing. The wonderful thing about us talking about drugs is that you've GOT to talk about drugs, you've got to be open and honest and discover things. But you've got to be careful. And often you get these adults, in England there's this anti-drug campaign and there's this weatherman who tells kids to be aware about drugs, and the kids look at that and say "What the FUCK does he know about drugs?" Kids aren't that dumb. At least when I come out and say, fucking watch it, it's dangerous, they know I've been there and they might believe me.

East Coast Exchange

Have you, by some bizarre chance, been deprived of East Coast Exchange's past three issues? YOU HAAVE? Tisk, tisk, tisk. Well, you don't know what you've been missing! Interviews with bands like Lucy Brown and Bouncing Souls (Issue #2) Desiderata, Senator Flux and Punk Face (Issue #3) Agnostic Front, Helmet, Grey, and the Mighty Mighty Bosstones (Issue #4), to name a few, are jam packed into our last three issues. But that's not all! Articles which are interesting to read, awesome photos, and for you twisted types, some off-the-wall comics. Dig It! Look no further. Not only can these fanzines be yours just by asking, but they are also being offered at the low price of \$1.25 each! versus three bucks in stores. (okay add 29 cents for postage, but still it's only \$1.54 out of your pocket.) This is a chance-of-a-lifetime deal. Don't miss it!

A Worlds Collide Music Video of Absolute is also available for only \$6. The running time is five full minutes. I actually end up losing out on the video. It cost \$5 to make the video alone and \$2.90 for me to ship it, so don't think it's a ripe off.

"Amaurosis", an E.C.E. production is a 30 minute, 16 mm film about a woman and her emotional reaction to finding out she has a sexually transmitted disease. The music is by the 3 Pigs (consisting of Syd Butler and Jon Model from Desiderata, Rob Hurd and on acoustic guitar Jeff Turner from Gray Matter) You can rent it from Kims video on St. Marks and 2nd Ave. or send me \$15.00 (the price it cost to make the tape and ship it to you.)

We are currently working on a documentary film about women in underground bands. E.C.E. is looking for all female bands or female band members for interviews plus possible coverage of a live show. It's a no pay deal. Sorry, but although it is low budget, it will be excellent publicity for the bands involved. The film will deal with why the artists choose to stay out of the main stream music industry and how female bands are perceived by their audiences and society. If you're interested or have any thoughts or opinions on the topic, feel free to write and let me know just exactly what you're thinking.

Thanks for your time Ethan H. Minsker

EAST COAST EXCHANGE 184 Lexington Ave. Apt 7B, New York City, NY 10016-6841

by Tom Brebric

Dandelion Fire's current self-titled CD on Well Primed Records is the band's first release, yet it has managed to stir up a significant amount of interest in the group's unique blend of psychedelia and danceable pop/rock, or whatever you want to call it. We caught up with band members Lee D'Onofrio (vocals/lyrics) and Gary Kaplan (guitar/b.vocals) at a local bar to see what they had to say about themselves...

Q: Dandelion Fire keeps being compared to the "Manchester Sound" bands from England and even has been

accused of being *too* British sounding... How do you react to that?

We listen to everything - Luna, old Galaxie 500, the Beatles, Charlatans UK, Stone Roses, even Ride. We like the harder American stuff like Husker Du also. The problem with our music is that I like music that has psychedelic versatility.

Q: That sounds like a drug.

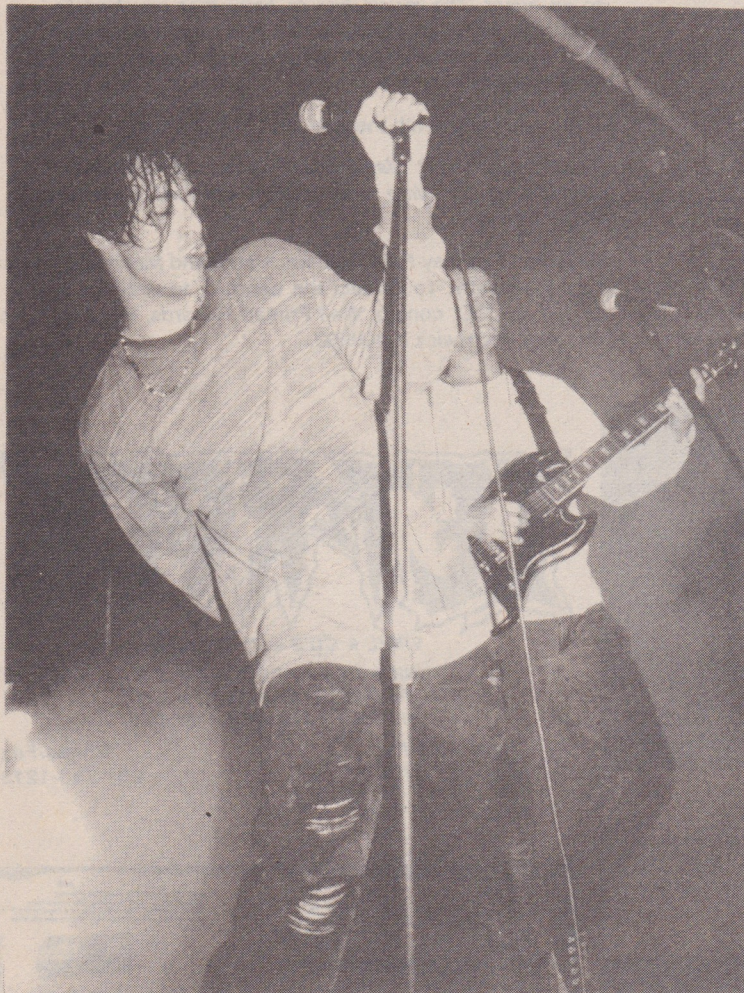
People can come to our shows and not be on anything and enjoy the show. It's a good visual and sound show. The music has to work on both levels. Manchester is an overused term for bands that sound any bit psychedelic these days, like all those other bands (Happy Mondays, Inspiral Carpets, etc.) that use organs, synthesizers, and drum machines. We use a drum machine on one song, other than that we're bass, drums, and guitar. It's more California '65 than Manchester... The dance influence is there, but songs like "Above You Now" and "I Grew" are hard rock songs.

The music is danceable in the sense that if you were to listen to an old Stones or Beatles song when they were in their pop stage, that stuff was dancey.

We can't complain about the press because even though they use the term "Manchester," it has been used in a very flattering way. We've been compared to the Cure, our first demo went to CMJ and they gave us a "Jackpot" in their Futures column. Any journalist who can use catchphrases like "Manchester" to describe bands like My Bloody Valentine and Ride is not up on music.

Q: How did the band get together?

There's a bar in New Brunswick called The Melody and Matt Pinfield (the music director of WHTG 106.3 FM) - who also went on to subsequently produce our CD - played a lot of the music we like.



DANDELION FIRE

Psychedelic Diversity Under Fire

Our live show is more than just going to see a live band. We used major projections, lights, and overhead projectionists, and we have tons of feedback and screaming guitars.

Q: You spoke of quitting your day jobs and going on tour... How close are you to that point?

We've done everything on our own and we got to play the best venues in Manhattan - the Marquee, the Limelight, the New Music Seminar. But now we're starting to bridge out where we can't handle it anymore. Colleges are starting to play our CD and want to book us - we handled getting the CD out on our own - we pressed up a thousand and only serviced 62 college stations, yet we think we might break the CMJ Top 150 for college airplay.

Q: Are you handling all your promo yourselves or is Well Primed involved?

Basically, it's us. We used Well Primed as a label because we didn't want to strike out on our own. Frank (Well Primed's owner) would like to spend more dollars if he could, but he does the best he can with limited resources.

Q: What's the next step?

We had some labels contact us but basically I don't have enough CD's to give them. If they want to see us, I tell them to come to the live show. But A&R guys get put out by that.

Q: Would you say your stage show, with the lights and smoke, is a highlight or an integral part of the band?

It's as much a part as the music is. People go see bands at the same clubs - we try to transform the club into "our home" while we're on stage. We try and create a dreamlike, surreal atmosphere when we play.


Q: Any comments about "E" and drugs at your shows?

I think that there may be some people coming to our shows under the influence of God knows what, and I think they'd really enjoy the show because the music lends itself to being psychedelic - but there are also people who go to the shows straight and they enjoy it as an event. The music has to have that psychedelic versatility. As far as the band, we don't really have any comments on what (drugs) we do or have done - that's our business.

Q: Are you happy with the way the CD came out?

We're happy with it. Matt Pinfield made a big difference. Considering the time and money constraints, we're happy with it.


Dandelion Fire play New Brunswick area and Manhattan clubs frequently. To contact the band, or to write for a copy of the CD, contact Well Primed Records, PO Box 351, New Brunswick NJ 08903.



V E R S U S

NARC003 BRIGHT LIGHT/FOREST FIRE 7"


**FUNKY FRESH
DOPE FROM**



ALSO AVAILABLE SWIRLIES ERROR 7"
EACH \$3.50 POSTPAID US/CANADA
\$6.00 OVERSEAS-SEND SASE OR IRC
FOR CATALOG OF OTHER 7" RELEASES
1085 COMMONWEALTH AVE #339
BOSTON, MA 02215

NARC002 SMELL/COLIN'S HEROES 7"

the dambuilders




VINYL ★ CD'S ★ 7" SINGLES

PUNK ★ OI ★ HARDCORE ★ SKA
STRAIGHTEDGE ★ GOTHIC ★ ETC...
T-SHIRTS ★ FANZINES ★ BOOKS

424 Bloomfield Ave.
Montclair, NJ 07042

Phone/Fax
201-783-1213

TWO BRAND NEW BANDS FROM
RATFISH RECORDS

ALMOST RIPE: *FUCK YOU, HERE'S*

BIG'N FEAST

new seven inch single "King Hot/Pants/Adagga Gives"
Chicago static groan and drone

truly manic Boston rejects
new single "Manana/Walk in the Garden" in stereo

coming in December: The new 5 song EP from THE
KEEP, their rawest ever. Also due is the debut
release from TOAST-melodic tunes from the NH
coast on a 4 song seven inch.

All Cotton T-shirts for any band are
\$10 each (yes there are RATFISH logos too.)

THREE DOLLARS EACH:
seven inch records available: LEGENDARY LUNCH "Blind/
Time After Time", "Things I've Seen/Good Goddamn", THE
KEEP "Song For the Country/Sweet Suzanne", "She's So
Wild/What's Right", COMMON AILMENTS OF MATURITY
"Long Fuse Jack/Blue Squid Shoes", Machinery Turning/
Erection", P38 "Burnin' Fire/Wildmouse", SPLIT 7" with KINGS
OF FEEDBACK and LEGENDARY LUNCH



PO BOX 1859
CAMBRIDGE MA 02238

by Jim Testa

When it comes to fist shaking, trash talking, butt scratching, chest pumping male bullshit, it doesn't come any thicker than in hip hop or hardcore punk. Put those two genres together and you're liable to come up with a funky hybrid that'll drive the politically correct outta the room faster than a fart. Enter Urban Riot Gang, a seven-man posse from North Jersey whose crunchy debut demo mixes rap and punk and a whole lotta testosterone into one inflammatory package. Give a listen cuz if there's any justice left in the music biz, these boys are gonna be the next big thing outta Jersey. We got the lowdown from one of the group's vocalists, Fitz.

Q: Could you introduce everyone in the current lineup of URG and mention any previous bands you've been in.

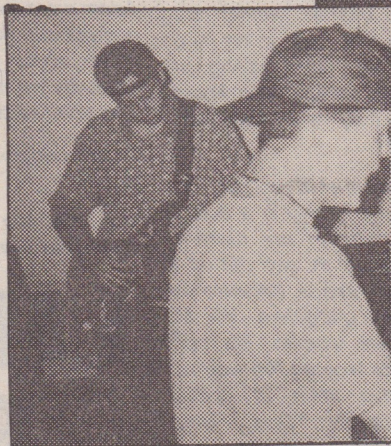
The current lineup consists of Sticky, Shadow, and myself on vocals; Flynn on guitars; H.D. on bass; and Geege on drums. We also have a d.j named Buck who performs with us live, and another singer named Adam who helps out on stae. I haven't had any previous bands, but H.D. is currently in a band called Audio Enima, and Geege was in Dr. Zeus.

Q: A lot of bands brought live instruments to hip hop in 1992, including Body Count, Basehead, Arrested Development, and the Beastie Boys. Do you think that's an inevitable trend in rap, or do you think hardcore rappers like Chuck D. (who has said he doesn't think there should be live instruments on a hip hop record) will prevail?

I feel that over the last couple of years, rap music has gained more respect as a musical form. Rap is a legitimate form of music and I feel that it deserves to expand and grow as music. Rap music is very aggressive, as is heavy metal. I think that more rap bands are beginning to realize the benefits of using live instruments, and I think more rappers will be using live instruments in the future. Keep in mind that when rap was first recorded (Sugar Hill Gang), sampling was a relatively new technique and was not used a lot. These bands used live instruments, and I feel that they produced some of the most honest rap records to date. As for ourselves, we use live instruments as well as samples. Our idea was to combine the natural aggression in rap lyrics with the natural aggression of hardcore music, that creates true hardcore rap. I don't agree with Chuck D., I think using live instruments allows more flexibility and opens a lot of creative doors.

Q: In your bio, you said you were looking for "management and a label." Would I be right in inferring then that you're now starting to look at music more in terms of turning it into a career than as just a way to hang out with your friends or something to do after school? Does that make any kind of difference in the way you approach the band or the music, or the role the band plays in your lives?

Music for us is an outlet. We have and always will be serious about the music we create. The music we write



comes from the things we see and experience on a daily basis. The only reason we are looking for a record deal is so we can continue to produce and record our music. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that being in a band becomes an expensive habit. Clubs aren't anxious to pay you a lot, because you need them more than they need you. The only way to make money is to sell your merchandise and the only way to do that is to make tapes and play clubs. It tends to become a no win situation.

Music for us will always be music, and Urban Riot Gang will always be Urban Riot Gang. Money can not and will not change that. Although it is nice to have. Money is only necessary so we can continue to make music. Our drummer, Geege, has a masters degree in chemistry; he doesn't have to rely on a band to make money. He's in it because music is something to do. As for the rest of us, if we weren't into music, we would be TROUBLE!

Q: How much of what is on the tape can you do live, and how much of it is done with sequencers and samplers?

We don't use sequencers or samples live. We can perform all the material on the tape live. The recording itself doesn't have an abundance of samples anyway. Buck spins any live samples off a record and even then their use is minimal. Our live energy usually covers up for any missing samples. I don't think people want to hear the songs live exactly the way they sound on the tape anyway. If that were the case, they could save money and sit home and listen to the album.

Q: You take the typical "gangsta" approach toward women in a lot of your lyrics -- women are bitches, women are whores. I always wonder when I hear that stuff on hip hop records, is that just an attitude or a role you're playing, or do you guys really feel like that? What do you think about gangsta-type lyrics and the influence they have, especially on younger kids (who eat that shit up)?

We do not play any roles. What you see is what you get. The

"gangsta" thing is a bunch of bullshit in my opinion. We do not try and put off a gangsta image, because we are not gangsters. We do not hate women. We only refer to women the way we perceive them in certain situations. "One Pump Jump" is an inside story about an experience we had with a certain young lady. We don't classify all women as "ho's" or "bitches."

I'm not concerned with the effect our music will have on younger kids, because if they're listening to our music, they have probably been exposed to these sorts of things already anyway. Kids who haven't had these experiences are probably sheltered from us as well. We relate our own

experience, we don't encourage people to do what we do or what we say.

Q: The demo is very well produced. Where did you record it, and is there anyone you give credit to for helping it come out so good? Do you have any advice for new bands who want to make their first demo -- mistakes you made that they could avoid?

We recorded the album at Marion Studios in Fair-

view, NJ. We owe a lot to our engineer, Frank Fagnano. He has worked with Naughty By Nature, so he had plenty of good ideas on how to record us. We also owe a lot to our friends who encouraged us throughout the recording, which took about 4 months. Billy D. Murph, Fruiti, Higgins and Adam were there for the whole thing so I have to give them a shout-out. As for advice to other bands, I don't know that much about recording, so I don't know what kind of mistakes we might have made. All I can say is go in angry and don't settle for second best. Be persistent!

Q: Tell people how they can reach you and what you have for sale.

We have two tapes available as well as t-shirts. Anyone interested can contact us at the following address:

URBAN RIOT GANG

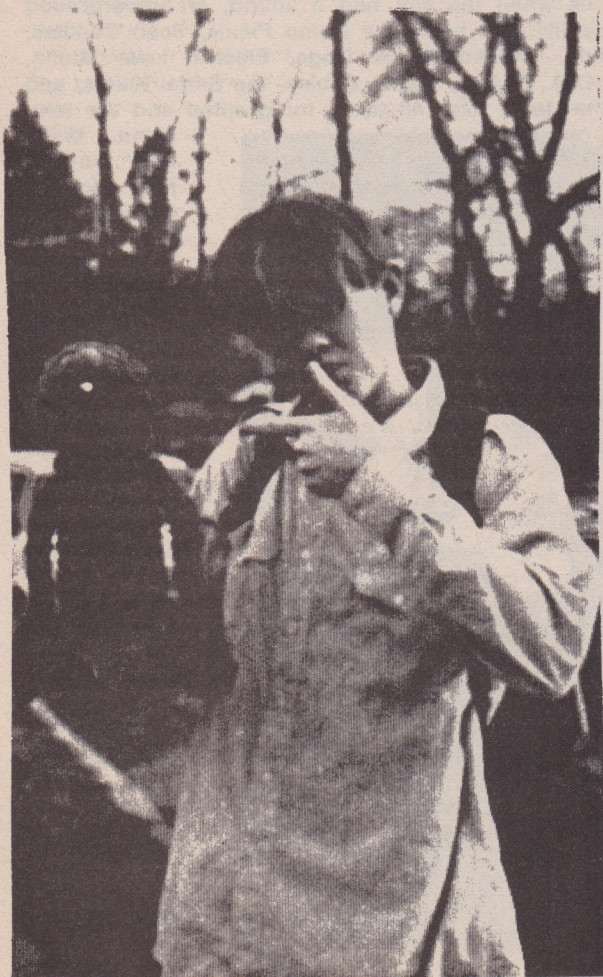
62 Benson Dr.
Wayne NJ 07470



ANIMAL WORLD - 4 song demo (PO Box 2503995, CU Station, New York NY 10025) Young lads seeking direction and meaning, playing a sound that reminded me a bit of the early Violent Femmes. Nice first effort. - Tom B.

BETTY - Demo (c/o Topher Lafata, Box 249, 330 Summit St, Hartford CT 06106) Record live, no dubs, this finger-snapping Ween-type college band gives us eight songs of raw fun. I asked the band if they'd ever heard of Ween and they said no, so they must smoke the same pot or something. Better do have their own identical, though, and the demo shows lots of hope for the future. The best song is "Hurts Al's Fingers," which should be the first song on the demo, not the third. I love higher education, don't you? - Frank P.

CHABOLA - Demo (No address) If you can get past the vocals - which give new meaning to the word "noisy" - and get into the playing, there's plenty to like on Chabola's three song tape. Guitar, bass, and drums make the most wicked improvisatory jazz/rock/funky thrash I've ever heard. Okay, first time I played this, all I could think of was, "somebody shoot



Swill



DEMO TAPES

that poor singer and put him out of his misery." Two or three takes later, though, and all I heard was the head-spinning wizardry coming out of those instruments. Proceed at your own risk, if you can find them - these guys play out about once every other blue moon. - Jim T.

GUT - Demo (No address) Being that this was the first demo review I'd write and I'd just finished reading Ben Weasel's complaint about all the shitty demos around, I was perfectly prepared to start off my career by panning some poor young band into obscurity. Instead, I come off half-liking this drone, yet mildly catchy beat-driven cassette. It's sparse and the vocals use that dumbass in-a-box effect, but it doesn't inspire my hatred. It's like a duller version of San Francisco's Hemi's at half-speed. - George Chen

HOLESHOT - "Live On WPSC" (16 Woodland Ave, Verona NJ 07044) If Holeshot had been around five or six years ago, they would have been on Buy Our Records and opened for Adrenalin O.D. and Bedlam at all the clubs that used to book punk bands. Nowadays, though, there's almost no place around here for a humorous thrash band to play, and not much of an audience left for this kind of moshcore. With song titles like "Convertible Hearse," "Jeffrey Dahmer's Lawyer," and "Tag You're It," there's obviously a comedic element to this group, although the delivery is straightahead thrash, without the sort of inflections or arrangements that would make you think they're trying to be funny. I wish them well, but I think they missed the boat. - Jim T.

JUDGE NOTHING - "More" (2717 Brown St, Alton IL 62002) This is an amazingly cool cassette release, with the Alton IL trio coughing up six chunky songs of considerable note. A sense of fun, a singer who can sing and a good balance of hooks and drive make me proclaim Judge Nothing the best thing to come from Illinois since... nevermind. Produced by Bill Stephenson and Stephen Egerton of ALL, all yet for hanker for

pop in punk clothing should check this out. Primo shit. - George C.

OVERSIGHT - "No Return" demo (283 Betsinger Rd, Sherrill NY 13461) I've been told by a higher authority to make these reviews short so... Oversight are typically generic hardcore with the typical 16 measures of ripping speed and 84,000 measures of slow mosh rhythms (or vice versa in the tricky songs.) The sad part is that bands like this are usually talented musicians who release good-sounding tapes, but never delve into anything new. So they end up squandering their talent repeating the hardcore norm. Typical verse: "I gotta get in touch with myself/so I can see the truth inside." So I guess they're straight-edge too. - Alex Swain

PEE TANKS - "Pro Fun" (% Evan Tanner, 1541 Defense Hwy, Gambrills MD 21054) Here's proof you don't need a fancy sleeve and slick packaging for your demo if the music's good enough. This didn't even come in a cassette case, just a loose tape with a letter wrapped around it. Luckily, the band's great, sort of an updated Angry Samoans punk sound with great drums and lively vocals, heavier and faster than, say, Green Day, but with the same sense of fun. Songs are about food, fun, and girls, although there are some serious tunes, along with a killer instrumental and even a rap song with thrashy breaks (like "Fight For Your Right To Party.") I'd love to see this band live. - Jim T.

PSYCHIATRIC PETTING ZOO - "Rhythm Of The White Guy" (% Bob, PO Box 9382, Reno NV 89507) They must call themselves "Psychiatric" because they're so schizophrenic - one side of this band's brain jangles to the sound of nimble jazz and funk rhythm guitar riffs, while the other side moshes like a three-hundred skinhead in an Anthrax t-shirt. I'm not sure how to take any of this - the thrash has the all the subtlety of comic-book meatheads like Biohazard, and the photos on the cassette sleeve make the band appear like college guys who wear shirts on stage and don't have a lot of upper body tattoos, so this might be meant as some kind of parody. Then again, maybe they just like to mosh in Nevada. Your call. - Jim T.

RED PAINT PEOPLE - Demo (% Stroller, 4707 Hazel Ave, Philadelphia PA 19143) Some bands write lots of different songs, and some bands have a *sound*. Red Paint People sound mean - tough, sinewy, biting guitars over growling vocals, set to a percussive maelstrom of a beat that charges right down your

throat. Fans of Amphetamine Reptile hatecore bands should eat this up, even if these mooks are from the City of Brotherly Love. - Jim T.

SPENT - Demo (25 Duncan Ave, Jersey City NJ 07304) This new group includes John King (ex-Our American Cousins) on guitar and vocals, but Spent has a much richer and more complex guitar sound than the spun-sugar pop of the Cousins. With three guitarists who trade off on vocals, the band also has three distinct personalities - John writes light-hearted love songs with catchy hooks, Joe Weston's songs tend to be slower and more dour, while Annie Hayden brings a very Juliana Hatfield-like presence to the band (which inspires a lot of Blake Babies comparisons.) Fans of dense, noisy guitar arrangements should dig this, although there's also that element of earnest, straightforward pop/rock, not unlike a lot of the new post-hardcore Dischord bands like Tsunami, Velocity Girl and Highback Chairs. Inspirational verse: "I tell you everything/I tell you I'm sorry/And I'd give you the shirt off my back/If I had a nicer body." - Jim T.

SPORE - Demo (% Mike, Rich & Paul, 3854 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia PA 19104) I used to live in Philadelphia when the city had a sound, an underground identity. But band like Homo Picnic, Scab Cadillac, Ruin, Trained Attack Dogs, Electric Love Muffin, F.O.D., McRad, Pagan Babies, the Serial Killers, and She-Males were all taken for granted and are long

gone. Well, that sound, that kick in the ass, that special something that made the Philly scene unique, is festering again. Philly has another chance, and its chance to latch and hold onto something worthwhile is all rolled up into a band called Spore. Featuring Mike Dean (ex-C.O.C.) and Rich (formerly of 70 million Philly bands) along with a guitarist named Paul (who's been around the block in Philly too), Spore makes gritty, gri-

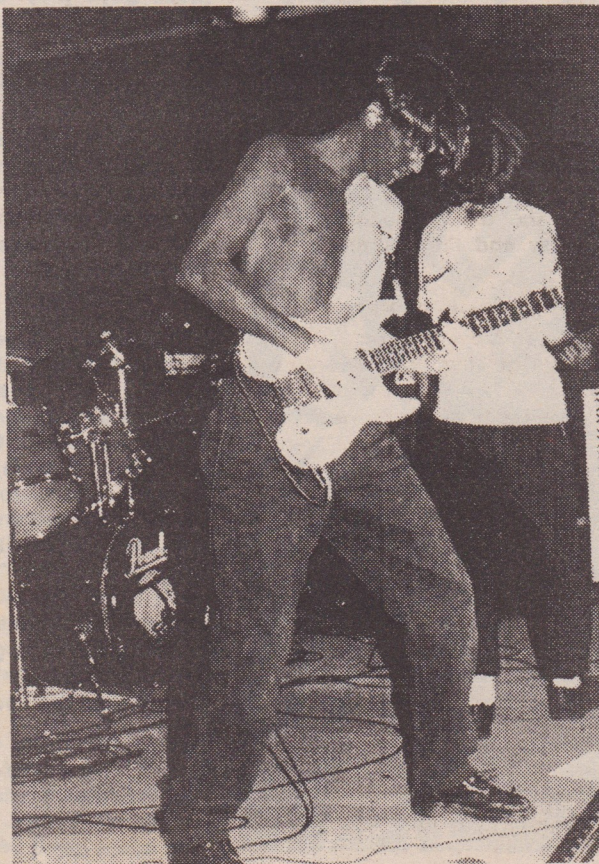


PHOTO BY JIM T

Sound Advice

me, Black Sabbath-ish rock to sink your teeth into. This is chip on your shoulder rock. Hard. "Bad Wheel" and "Nine" are standouts. Find out more about this band. - Frank P.

SWILL - Demo (% Alex, 6 Greenview Ave, Princeton NJ 08540) Princeton's answer to the Everly Brothers, Swill consists of two post-teenage mutants crooning moon-faced love songs in close harmony over an acoustic guitar. Several of the tunes remind me of Evan Dando at his mushiest. Riot grrls looking for sensitive boyfriends should love this band. - Jim T.

SOUND ADVICE - Demo (211 E 10th St #2, New York NY 10003) This NYU-based quartet calls its music "dream pop," which sums up the elegant shower of hooks and electronic effects in their soaring romantic anthems. Heavily influenced by both the New Romantics and today's British shoegazers, Sound Advice often err in laying it on a bit too thick, but their music is redeemed by both impressive musicianship and some great hooks. Jason Ellis sings like someone who's not only had voice training but also stage experience; his theatrical presence and striking range bring to mind the similiar gifts of Brad Kane of the Misconceptions (another group that got its start at NYU.) Matt Szwed on guitar throws a dizzying array of effects at your ears along with a knack for inventive arpeggios and memorable riffs. There aren't a lot of other bands whose songs I started humming after one listen. That's more than enough reason to hope there's more where this demo came from. - Jim T.

STAGGER LEE - Demo (115 Tamarack Rd, Budd Lk NJ 07828) Crunchy funky hard rock with a few ballads. The opening track "The Bad Seed" sounds like the sort of funk move a cheese metal band like Mr Big or Ugly Kid Joe would make searching for a big hit single, but the rest of the demo veers away from compulsive commerciality and finds a much tastier groove. - Jim T.


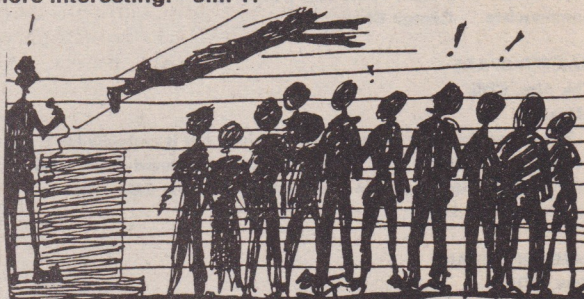
STICK FIGURE - "A Listening Party (In Hi Fi)" (PO Box 4571, College Pt NY 11356) More live-rock meets hip hop. I like the riffs, I like the rhymes, I wonder what this is like live? "Oooh R.E.M." wins the Best Song Humiliating Major Alternative Rock Stars award. - Jim T.

URBAN LUNCHMEAT - "Show Us Your Fangs" (6528 Collins Ave, Pennsauken NJ 08109) I had a friend in college named Gus from Pennsauken. He was weird too. MRR's review blew this trio off as art fags, understandable given the strange-sounding ambient chords (a Wire influence, perhaps), the homage to the Pixies on side two of the tape, and the droney vocals reminiscent of some of the artier D.C. bands like Girls Vs Boys and Senator Flux. But then how do you explain "Dominique," which is so pure Old School NY/HC it reminded me of Kraut's "Kill For Cash?" Or the 1,000-bpm "Ocean," which ends side one. Or the dopey photo on the sleeve that makes these guys look like the Fiendz' country cousins? I dunno, either these guys are total geniuses or they have no idea what they're doing. Either way, it makes for an interesting tape. - Jim T.

VELVIS UNDERPANTS - Demo (46 Willow Lane, Tenafly NJ 07670) This tape sounds exactly like the tapes I make when I'm experimenting with new songs. A bit reminiscent of an extremely bad Ween, yet not quite as together (minus the drums and bass - scary, isn't it?) They lyrics can be funny at times: "I bought her Doc Martens and bleach for her long hair." They rule in my book just because they use a 4-track. - Alex S.

VIOLET GUATARR - 3 song demo (no address) For the first few seconds, I thought I was listening to the theme from "Shaft," one of my favorite blaxploitation flicks. A good start - but the last song should have been the first cut since it was something to be appreciated at a very loud level. - Tom B.

Y GRIEGA - "A Low Sodium Food" (George Chen, PO Box 20746, San Jose CA 95160) Some entertaining weirdness in a Ween-ish vein, with a rollercoaster opening track that includes space-rock riffing and spoken word goofiness. The songs that sound like, well, punk rock songs are the weakest tracks here. Whenever these guys pump themselves up with imagination (and Scotchguard, I assume) it gets a lot more interesting. - Jim T.



NEW 7"
CANDY COATED VOODOO
AND
GLUE
FEATURING ADDITIONAL VOCALS BY
SUZI GARDNER OF L7
OUT NOW!
\$4ppd \$5 Europe
WRITE: WEB OF SOUND RECORDS
PO BOX 6257
WYOMISSING, PA 19610
checks/money orders payable to:
Cathy Mallon

Record Reviews

7 YEAR BITCH

Sick Em, CD
C/Z Records

Totally rad. I mean, I did everything in my pants when I heard this. The music is really heavy grunge/punk with some riot girl sensibilities that thankfully don't get too overbearing. Yet quite obviously, these women mean business, with song titles like "In Lust You Trust," "Dead Men Don't Rape," and "No Fucking War." - Mike Lupica

ATOMIC BOY

Love And Revolution, CD
Hipnotic

So hook-filled, I think I punctured something. To betray my Mod Rock roots, We Want A Revolution sounds like a tune by former Brit hype Birdland. (Anyone get that reference? Good, have a Snookie snack.) On ever other level, however, Atomic Boy is distinctive enough to break from that pop/alt rock hybrid. This 5-song CD pours forth pop in a mix between Dramarama Lite and a beer commercial. Well, some cool people have done beer commercials. - George Chen

BAILTER SPACE

The Aim, CD5
Matador

They describe their sound as "punishing" but it certainly isn't evident here. Unless they're talking about a watered-down version of that word that may have been birthed by some CMJ coolie or something. - Mike L.

BAND OF SUSANS

Now, CD5
Restless

Their sixth release contains a remix of "Now Is Now" and two (!) versions of "Paint It Black." I enjoyed the guitar sounds that I heard, but on a six song CD, I expected more than half the songs to be new. - Tom Brebric

BEDLAM ROVERS

Wallow, CD
Spirit, PO Box 170195, San Francisco CA 94117

These S.F. folkies kick out some jams on their second album, making 1990's "Frothing Green" lp seem a might pea-hued. The guitar and fiddle just meander their way across layers of folk, rawk and even semi-reggae. The amazing Caroleen has gotten even better, working her throaty spell on the sunning "Scream." In a biz full of superlatives, the Bedlam Rovers are the most righteous rockers to aim at the Pogues and ricochet off into semi-legendary status. - George C.

BENTLEY TOCK

Able, CD
Liquid Records, PO Box 141993, Austin TX 78714

Able is a folky acoustic rock album, with the exception of two songs - "Let Me Breathe" and "Child," which break out into an undirected and underplayed grunge spectacle. I mean, after all, it is 1992, and we're all Punk now. The rest of the album reminds me of Gordon Lightfoot. This is the kind of band I'd expect to find playing the lounge of your parents' favorite ski resort. - Greg Matherly

BEYOND ZEBRA

Gone Today, Here Tomorrow, CD
TwinTone

Sad to say, this is the first TwinTone release to get my attention since Ween's debut. Beyond Zebra play a brand of meat 'n potatoes rock n roll that we've all heard a thousand times before, but with a level of songwriting that raises it above the pack. God, it's hard to find new ways to describe this stuff. Can I just say this is a promising debut and I'd like to hear more? - Sal Cannestra

BLOOD CIRCUS

Primal Rock Therapy, CD
SubPop

Blood Circus are a none-too-interesting footnote in the history of grunge rock. They weren't one of the best but they were certainly one of the first. All the right elements are present, but they don't add up to anything memorable. For collectors and historians only. - Sal C.

BODECO

Bone, Hair & Hide, CD
Homestead

Louisville, KY's Bodeco play Mexican, surf, Latin, and rockabilly, put forth with raucy Gibby-esque (Lady Sniff-era) vocals. Sixteen songs, and ten are good; the other six are shitty sub-versions of the other ten. Highlights include "Gunselin' Zula Queen," "Bella Negritta" and "Spank Your Fanny." With a bit more originality, I could really like these guys. - Frank Phobia

BOMB

Hate Fed Love, CD
Reprise

Grooving hard-driving rock. This is a band that would be great live, and their energy is quite well reproduced on this disc. As Bomb veer off in many musical directions, I follow with interest. They made me want to hear more. Crank the volume on this one and I guarantee it'll earn heavy rotation on your CD player. - Jamie Turner

BOMB EVERYTHING

The All Powerful Fluid, CD
Devotion, 102 Belsize Ln, London UK NW3 5BB

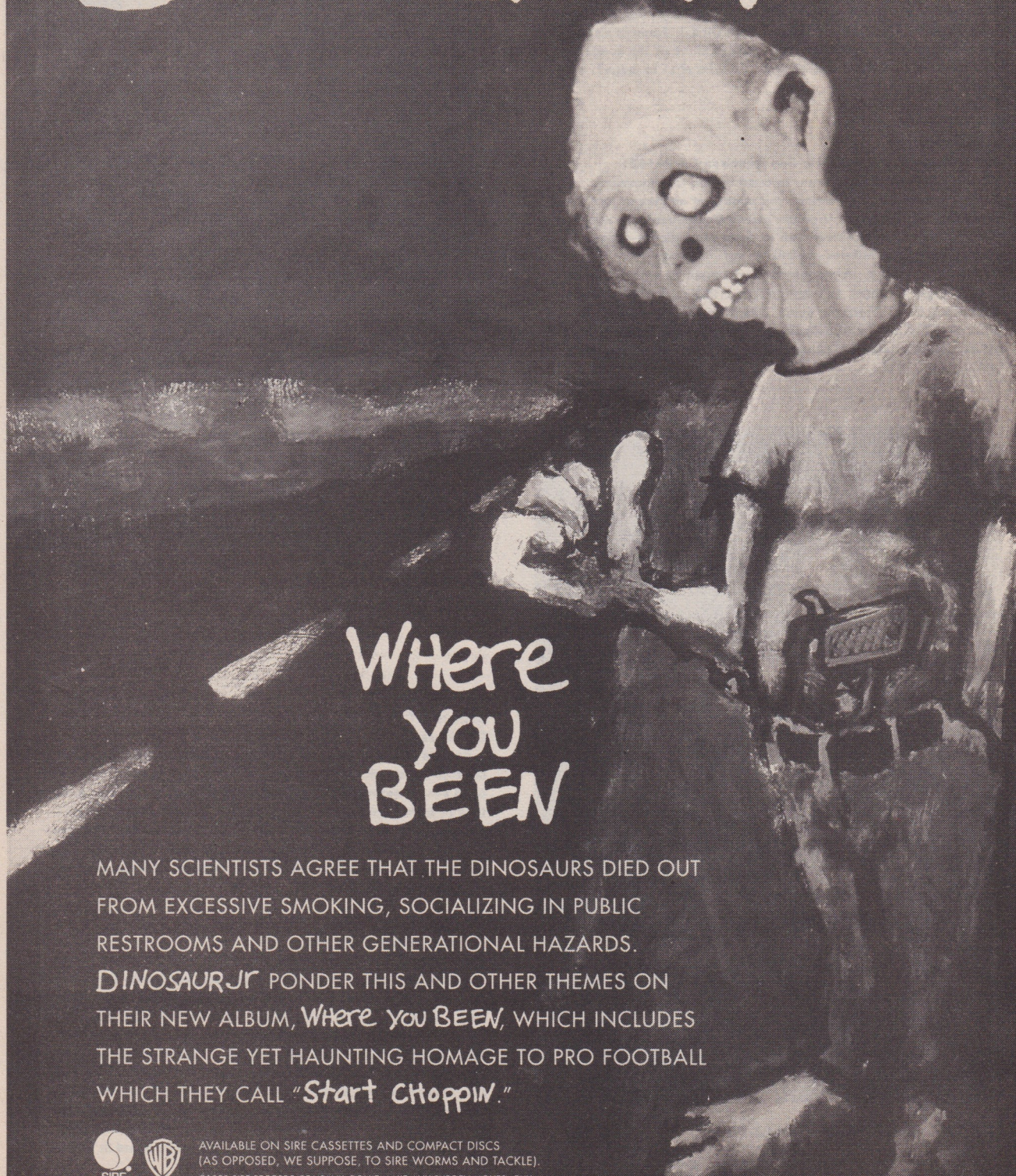
London's answer to Ministry. Every single song is in E and sounds the same. The third tune is called "Who Cares?" Exactly. A true waste of plastic and paper, not to mention my precious hearing and time. This put me in a bad mood. - Frank P.

BOO RADLEYS

Everythings Alright Forever, CD
Columbia

The Boo Radleys are a foursome who play gorgeous pop songs with a hint of noise, but instead of ruining the song, that bit of dissonance makes it work. This is their first full lp, coming after a string of import-only EP's and singles. If you're a fan of Lush, Ride, and My Bloody Valentine, then the Boo Radleys are for you. Some of the best moments here come when all the guitars swirl around each other, like water down a drain. It happens a lot, especially on "Skyscraper" and "Room At The Top." There's a lot of upbeat stuff too, making this a wonderful album, consistent and shimmery-sounding. - Jodi Shapiro

DINOSAUR JR



Where you BEEN

MANY SCIENTISTS AGREE THAT THE DINOSAURS DIED OUT FROM EXCESSIVE SMOKING, SOCIALIZING IN PUBLIC RESTROOMS AND OTHER GENERATIONAL HAZARDS.

DINOSAUR JR PONDER THIS AND OTHER THEMES ON THEIR NEW ALBUM, *Where you BEEN*, WHICH INCLUDES THE STRANGE YET HAUNTING HOMAGE TO PRO FOOTBALL WHICH THEY CALL "*Start Choppin*."



AVAILABLE ON SIRE CASSETTES AND COMPACT DISCS
(AS OPPOSED, WE SUPPOSE, TO SIRE WORMS AND TACKLE).
©1992 SIRE RECORDS COMPANY. DON'T MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVES, GUY.

IAN BRENNAN

Stuff, CD

Toy Gun Murder, Box 410025, San Francisco CA 94141

Ian wants to be Bob Dylan, which isn't bad. But those are huge shoes to fill. This CD is written and produced by this guy I've never heard of, Ian Brennan, and after listening to it, I feel like I've intruded into this life and wasn't invited. The songs seem like personal music therapy. I must say I like "Father's Funeral," which reminds me of Jim Carroll's "People Who Died." There is also a John Mellencamp and Michael Penn feel to some of the songs, which are very personal and honest. So who am I to judge? - Frank P.

CAPITALIST CASUALTIES

Disassembly Line, LP

Slap-A-Ham, PO Box 420843, San Francisco CA 94142

If the American troops were to open fire on the Somalians they're supposed to be helping, you might get an idea of just how terrorizing this album is. Urgently played thrash/hardcore with great vocals, the songs deal with all sorts of politically-correct topics (anti-nukes, bullshit politicians, etc.) Everything is excellently executed. Although you can't keep up with the singer, when you get a chance to read the lyrics, there are some really hard-hitting lines. From the song "Down Town:" "The rats eat better than the children/Business suit steps over soiled rags/tunes out all uncomfortable questions..." Something I'd recommend. Tom Angelli

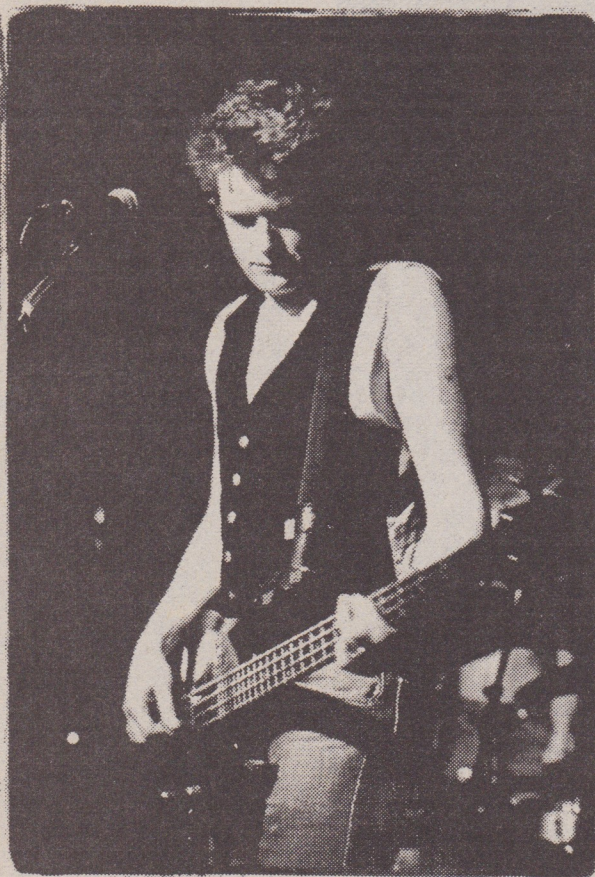


PHOTO BY SHAWN SCALLEN

Cop Shoot Cop

PHOTO BY JIM TESTA

Come**CATHARSIS**

Catharsis, CD

Doghouse

Sounds like they want to be Fugazi. Mild level rowdiness, some socio-political lyrical bent, kinda metal drum thing going on. The band seems connected to the Central California punks scene, but they're from Kentucky. Overall, this is a decent effort, though I found it interesting rather than enjoyable. Noteworthy tunes are "Days After," an anti-rape song, and "The Lost Song," 'cos I can relate. Also the cleverly hidden 11th through 14th tracks go unnamed. - George C.

THE COCKTAILS

The Early Hi-Ball Years, CD

Carrot Top, 3716 N Greenvlew, Chicago IL 60613

Isn't it hard to find really good blues and jazz bands these days? As far as those styles are concerned, you just can't touch the old stuff. Well... If you're beat, I's got news for you. Dig, like I don't know how they got here but thank heaven they did. These cats blow, man! A very serious joke indeed, a quartet complete with baritone and tenor saxophones, stand-up bass, brushes and vibes. This collection from three albums (24 songs in all) documents the Cocktails through several musical experiments. If you love jazzy, beatnik, spiff, zoom, zannnaacckkk.... you've really got no choice, do you? Definitely the most refreshing thing I've heard in a while. Old Jack would approve. - Greg M.

COFFIN BREAK

Thirteen, CD
Epitaph

The last thing I heard from Coffin Break was Psychosis (1989), which didn't impress me much...probably good live but boring on vinyl. Although my opinion hasn't changed, they have. With the addition of another guitarist, better production and directed more towards commercial metal, I do believe they have found where they perform best. Thirteen contains 12 controlled crossover ditties of introspection and reflection, plus a cover of Sabbath's "Hole In The Sky," which, honestly, I can't tell from the original. The song "Wasted Time" is almost an exact duplicate of Iron Maiden's "Wasted Years." Very boring as a whole. Guys, I think you should have released a single instead. - Greg M.

COP SHOOT COP

Suck City, CD5
Interscope

Industrial Rock with hooks AND a sense of humor. Cop Shoot Cop mix things up more than most other bands mining the same territory. This EP keeps throwing curveball after curveball and most are strikes. I've never heard their earlier indie LP, but if they can sustain the same level of craziness over the course of an album, Interscope definitely got a bargain with this veteran NYC noise band. - Sal C.

COME

Eleven:Eleven, CD
Matador

Thelia Zedek's allure owes its power to the same double-edged presence that Patti Smith brought to punk rock back in the 70's, a combination of emotional fragility and steely hardness. There's nothing pretty about Come's songs and there's no compromise in Zedek's vocals, which cut to the bone. The twin guitars bite and snarl with the same ferocity, the only downside being that a few of

these tunes drone on a bit too long for my taste. If Come make the jump to a major and get hooked up with a producer who can bring a little more economy and discipline to their stuff, this band is going to be amazing. As is, they're already pretty hot shit, and just getting better every time I see them. - Jim Testa

CRACKERBASH

Crackerbash, CD
Empty Records

XTZ/J Mascis vocals make an interesting mix. The guitars have that distorted Dino sound, that's two; yet the difference is that the song structures are way better and less noisy, moving the CD right along. Two rocking Thumbs up. - Dave Urbano

C*NTS

Lookout, lp

Disturbing, 3238 S Racine, Chicago IL 60608


They've been around for about 80 years. They never play out. They put out records full of noisy, clanky, garage rock. The only message they have is on the back cover of this lp: "Remember - have fun always!!!" They have song titles like "I Hate Reggae," "My Brain Flew Out The Window," and "My Baby's An Atomic Bomb." They have a totally limited appeal (if you're not into garage bands, you'll probably hate it), but they don't seem to care. Totally without pretension. - Ben Weasel

D.R.I.

Def-i-ni-tion, LP

Rotten, 133 N Citrus Ave #205, Covina CA 91723

Playing together now for over ten years, D.R.I. (two original members left) have released another album that won't disappoint old fans, but probably won't make much of an impression on new listeners either. Tight and bassy metal/hardcore with the expected slow-to-fast, let's-mosh parts grind away behind tough vocals. I



blue

down by law

the amazing second album
out now. grab it.

E
EPITAPH E-86419 6201 SUNSET BOULEVARD, SUITE 111, HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA 90028 USA

liked some of the songs, and they even tastefully incorporate the infamous "pranks tape" into one of them. I never got into D.R.I. years ago and this album hasn't converted me. - Tom A.

DIME BAG

Dime Bag, CD

Heat Blast, PO Box 491, Eatontown NJ 07724

While these guys rant on with no letup in the CD's liner notes about how shitty the world is, the listener should be the one doing the ranting - about how tired and unoriginal this band is. I'm sorry, but no amount of social commentary will change the fact that this Nirvana-ish grunge with more metal and (much) less vocal talent is sleep-inducing. Sorry guys, trying to display your anger by screaming your lungs out was done to death seven years ago. - Jamie T.

DOWNY MILDEW

An Oncoming Train, CD

High Street

Excellent pop. Charlie Baldonado, who plays guitars and keyboards and sings, brings out the layers of attention-grabbing detail in the arrangements with his shiny, clear production. Especially striking are the sighing background vocals and guitar put to virtually any use, sometimes with the judicious use of delay or slightly open tunings. Downy Mildew only sound like XTC when they want to, on the obvious tribute "Seconds Protest," which very nearly stands up to the real thing. Baldonado and versatile Jenny Homer sing with range, feeling and economy, although she is individual enough to perhaps be an acquired taste. - Mark Weiss

DRIP TANK

Slake, CD

Cargo

Rather generic pop from this group, but it has its high points. Overall though, the fast-moving poppy punk with female vocals formula just doesn't work very well here. - Jamie T.

DRUNKEN BOAT

See Ruby Falls, CD

First Warning

A song about getting out of my life, a pseudo-rap number called "Yard," a nice "Low Rider" remake with a trumpet in the background, and one song that sounded like a skipping record. Tim Sommer (of "Noise: The Show" fame) produced this. Wow, how some people mellow with age. - Tom Brebric

EMF

Stigma, CD

EMI

Laugh if you want to, but EMF have proven that they were more than 1991's Modern English. Less fizzy and dancey than their unexpected monster hit debut, the songs on Stigma have a harder edge and a much nastier sound, veering toward industrial rock. Whether or not their alterna-teen audience will take this detour with them remains to be seen, but even without a bona fide bubblegum chartbreaker like "Unbelievable," this lp has been on my CD changer for more spins than I can count. - Jim T.

THE EMPERORS OF ICE CREAM

Imperialism, CD

Molst/Baited Breath, PO Box 3597, Chapel Hill NC 27515

Catchy, happy pop from this North Carolina trio. They take bouncy rhythms and throw in lots of good harmonies for an enjoyable six-song release. Make the record longer next time! - Jamie T.

EXPLODING WHITE MICE

Collateral Damage, CD

NKVD, 5210 Bragg St, San Diego CA 92122

Twenty-three songs from Australia, all one-dimensional, speedy rock. It reminds me of The Monkees on speed. Not bad, not good, why bother? - Frank P.

F.Y.P.

Finish Your Popcorn, LP

Recess, PO Box 1113, Torrance CA 90505

FYP seem like nice guys, so I feel bad for slagging them, but this is an awful record. I like their yearbook insert, and can relate to the socially conscious lyrics, but the recording quality is piss poor at best. It sounds like a new band that's just gotten into punk and decided to record their rough, raw songs on a chintzy tape recorder to hear 'em back. In time, let's hope they blossom. - Tom A.

FAILURE

Comfort, CD

Slash

Riveting neo-industrial punk with a noisy blues feel (!?) Failure is one of those bands that possess the strange ability to keep building and building and rising and rising and coming oh so close...to drop you off just this side of orgasm. That's not all bad, though; everybody needs an opening band. Comfort was produced by God (Steve Albini to you). - Greg Matherly

FARSIDE

Rochambeau, LP

Revelation, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach CA 92615

I've been sitting here for 20 minutes trying to think of something I want to say about this album. If I could just overcome the gnawing feeling of wanting to rip the vinyl from my turntable and hurl it out the window, I might be able to think of something. This is an empty record, empty in a way that a lot of these "rock bands on hardcore labels" are empty. Listening to this gives me the same queasy feeling that I got from the last couple of 7 Seconds records. No, girls and boys, Michael does not like this. - Mike L.

FIENDZ

Wact, LP

Forefront

I've been hearing about this band for a while now, and words like "pop punk" always come up. Yeah, I guess it is pop punk, heavily influenced by All. But it really has very little in the way of punk. It's pretty wimpy, and the singer's congested, monotone voice is totally inappropriate for this kind of band. Pretty disappointing. - Ben Weasel

A NJ band that exudes a NICENess - nice singing, nice mellow beat, nice catchy hooks. (Nice fuck'n sentence.) There are enough good tunes on this album that I wish for more interesting arrangements. The singer's got a nice enough voice, a little bland but I'm satisfied. The only problem is the lack of distinctiveness to their sound. - George Chen

FISHWIFE

Ritalin, CD

Headhunter

The truest lyric is in calling tether-ball "an elementary voodoo toy." These guys are lucky they're not from the Bay Area or they'd be called Primus ripoffs. As is, it's a noisy, beat-oriented dirge trip. Not the kind of thing I go for (keep in mind, I liked the Blake Babies), with a possible appeal to metal types. The lyrical absurdity gels well with the warble/yodel/ screech vocals. - George Chen

FIVE-EIGHT

I Learned Shut Up, CD

Sky, 6400 Atlantic Blvd #220, Norcross GA 30071

This is meat 'n potatoes, not 70's-esque, rock 'n roll that you'll inevitably compare to those guys from Minneapolis who did (and do) it a whole lot better. Unfortunately, while the riffs are good, the band lacks the intensity required. Mike Mantione's washing guitar textures are fine and his solos are decent, but his voice can neither shout convincingly nor support a melody. Patrick Ferguson's drums plod - and they're way up in the mix. But the lyrics are interesting, so if this style is your bag and you stick with it longer than I did, there may be rewards. - Mark W.

FUZZTONES

Monster A Go Go, CD

Scream'n' Skull, PO Box 666, Middlesex NJ 08846

Thirteen spookadelic Halloween hits from everyone's favorite psychofuzz garage junkies. Just a little late this year, but that's okay because now every day can be Halloween. Imagine the horror when you hear "Jack The Ripper" or "Dinner With Drac." See your friends paralyzed with fear when they hear "All Black And Hairy" and "Goin' To The Graveyard." Halloween or not, the Fuzztones are always able to scare up a rockin' head flu of psychedelic ghosts. And speaking of ghosts, track #13 is a cover of Roky Erickson's (all hall) "Night Of The Vampire," complete with eerie organ. - Greg M.

GOBBLEHOOF

Freezer Burn, CD

New Alliance, PO Box 1389, Lawndale CA 90260

There used to be a NJ band called Triggervision who did the same sort of thing as Gobblehoof -- take traditional hard rock song structures and weld them up with industrial dissonance, spoken word bits, and percussive thrash parts verging on the psychotic. But while it's all a stimulating change of pace from typical Seattle grunge rock, I have to admit that I find myself incapable of listening to this entire CD in one sitting. And it's not that long. - Jim T.

GOO GOO DOLLS

Superstar Car Wash, CD

Metal Blade

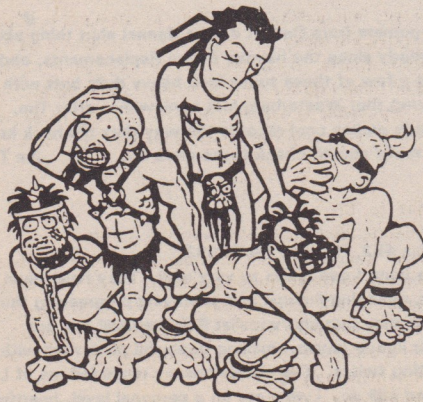
The Goo Goo's fourth lp strips away some of the raw edges and raggedy vocals so beloved on previous outings for a sleeker, shinier (and presumably more radio-friendly) sound, with altogether saner tempos and less frenetic solos. The cool cover tunes are missing too, and the lyrics here don't seem to have the same madcap energy and goofiness as before. I'm sure this lp will grow on me -- it's the same three guys after all, with the same fat hooks and drooling grins -- but since we got this advance tape just before our deadline, I really haven't had time to live with their alterations yet. And my first impression is that this new style just doesn't fit as well as the Goo Goo sound of the last two lp's, which I considered damn near perfect pop/punk. - Jim T.

GOOBER & THE PEAS

The Complete Works Of..., CD

Detroit Municipal, PO Box 20879, Detroit MI 48220

Cowboy rock from Detroit. Fun, lovable Mojo Nixon southern-fried culture, or some hybrid of Hank Williams. Seventeen songs and no filler. John Wesley Harding produced the CD. If you need to put a smile on your face and maybe even do a little hoedown, Goobar & The Peas are your remedy. - Frank P.



GWAR



JOE GRUSHECKY & THE HOUSEROCKERS

End Of The Century, CD

214 Sullivan St #5A, New York NY 10012

I was all set to label this country-rock when I read the promo sheet, which refers to the music as "rock and roll." Seems like there's a lot of country in it to me, though. But they're good solid songs of life and dreams and politics. This guy has been recording since the late 70's. An enjoyable hour and good background music. - Rod Leighton

GUMBALL

Wisconsin Hayride, CD5

Columbia

Imagine two Rat distortion pedals turned on at the same time with a punk rock beat. This is a hot sticky piece of Gumball wax. - Dave U.

GWAR

The Road Behind, EP

Metal Blade

This six-song feature's GWAR's obligatory road single from their recent America Must Be Destroyed lp as the title track. "The Road Behind" is a tune in the long-standing tradition of privileged rockers whining about how hard their life of drugs, groupies, junk food and motels is. The remaining 5 songs include four unreleased live tracks with production so poor they should have remained unreleased, and a new studio number about the band's drug of choice, "KraK-Down," which has been a staple in the live sets of GWAR's alter ego band, Rawg. Get America Must Be Destroyed if you haven't already, see the band live any chance you get, but skip this. - Johnny Puke

THE HAIR & SKIN TRADING CO.

Jo In Nine G Hell, CD

Sit2/Beggars Banquet

Gloomy goth-rock dressed up in a package that suggests very much otherwise. Not bad, but it's been done a million times before with varying degrees of style and success. Joy Division comes immediately to mind as an obvious comparison, but still, the moodiness of this makes it cool on the occasional listen. - Mike L.

THE HATED

What Was Behind, LP

Vermis Scum, 76 Summerfield Dr, Annapolis MD 21403

With a name like The Hated and a label called Vermis Scum, I was expecting dopey generic HC. Well, fuck me for prejudging, this is NOT what I thought. Reminiscent of a less manic Metal Circus-era Husker Du, What Was Behind is a solid LP (despite somewhat flat production.) They've since broken up, but you should still check this out. - Des Jr.

HOSS

You Get Nothing, CD

DogMeat, Box 2366V, Melbourne Australia

Scuzzy 70's guitar rock, especially the song "Crazy Tonkin", which is the best track. Definitely a country Paul Westerberg in the vocals there somewhere. - Dave Urbano

IMMACULATE FOOLS

The Toy Shop, CD

Continuum

You'd think that using an e-bow, dulcimer and violin would make interesting, ambient music. But instead, the Fools are trying to be the Alarm. Trouble is, they're not even good enough to ape those guys. Next. - Jodi S.

THE INTELLIGENCE UNIT

Foundation, CD

Cold Grey Matter, PO Box 14667, Chicago IL 60614

This is definitely not bad my bag but I'm sure there are aficionados of this kind of thing so... Slow gothic synth pop with titles like "The Black Death," "Seven Cities Of Gold," etc. The Intelligence Unit use their music as a large canvas on which they glide heavy oils or red & black and even a little torn lace, carefully, so as not to dirty their gloves. - Greg M.

JACOB'S MOUSE

No Fish Shop Parking, CD

Frontier

The Ramones went to Britan, and we got back the Clash and the Sex Pistols. I suspect Jacob's Mouse is Mother England's revenge for sending them Seattle grunge. This young trio takes the distortion and trashy riffs of the Pacific Northwest and twists them into a distinctly British spew which I find instantly compelling. Maybe these boys are wearing our castoff flannel shirts but they fit awfully well. - Jim T.

JAWBREAKER

Bivouac, CD

Tupelo/Communion

While Jawbreaker continues to write and play some of the most persuasive power-punk on the planet (and whatever happened to all that experimental dissonance they talked about in their Jersey Beat interview?), how do you ignore Blake Schwarzenbach's vocals? That six-packs-a-day croak of his just keeps getting worse (it turned out he was growing a polyp on his vocal cord while this was being recorded), and sometimes gets so hoarse that you can't even distinguish the vocals. If this keeps up, Blake's gonna record their next lp using one of those voice boxes you hold next to your adam's apple to electronically reproduce his vocals. Yuck. - Jim T.

JEHOVAH WAITRESSES

Shake Your Buddha, CD

Song O' The Sea, PO Box 18078, Cleveland OH 44118

Cleveland singer-songwriter Alan Grandy surrounded by two guys and two gals. This is what one would expect of Alan if you've heard earlier work - instrumentals not usually associated with alternative music (the violin is quite lovely) combined with what I call humor-pop. Nice, gentle, and intelligent vocals which are easily understood and fun, but which always have a valid point to make. Favorite cut: "Small Talk," a great song. - Rodney L.

JESUS LIZARD

Liar, LP

Touch & Go

Figuring that the majority of patrons of Maxwells have bad taste, I never bothered to listen to their unanimous opinion that Jesus Lizard are completely kickass, groin-exploding fantastic. But thanks to this new lp, I have to publically admit that they are an amazing group. Carnivorous-core that's not for the meek. You can't help but instantly fall for the vocals, song arrangements --



PHOTO BY MICHELE TAYLOR

Jesus Lizard

everything! Thick and driving songs with a smooth rhythm section carry on, while the guitar scratches your ears out. And Mr. Yow's singing is inspired not of this plane of existence. Cool cover, too. Meow. - Tom A.

JUNK MONKEYS

Bliss, CD

Metal Blade

Five greasy gomers from Detroit do the flannel shirt thing about as well as anybody since the heyday of the Replacements, and in fact more than a few of these tunes kick heavy duty butt with the same throaty zing that Westerberg lost somewhere after Tim. If you think nobody makes cool records the way they did back in '86 anymore, you really should check these guys out. - Jim T.

LAST CALL

Self-titled, LP

Esoteric, PO Box 452, Hershey PA 17033

Last Call is a band I can relate to very well. They have been around forever, changing lineups and positively progressing through the years. Main man guitarist/vocalist Bob Brechbill has put together a killer lineup (again,) making powerful punk rock with lots of fun, interesting twists. The vocals always reminded me of Lee Ving of Fear and still do. Lyrics are on a personal level, heartfelt and world conscious. This is a nice DIY lp, and I can't wait to hear what's next. 1993 should be a big year for Last Call. - Frank P.

LEATHERFACE

Mush, LP

Seed Records

Aussie punks who sound a whole lot like Jawbreaker, right down to the gravel-throated vocals and fuzz-pedal guitar changes. This rocks but it's nothing you haven't heard before on your favorite college radio station. - Jim T.

LOOTERS

Imago Mundi, CD

Monster, 274 Wattis Way, So San Francisco CA 94080

How does a review for the Looters wind up in Jersey Beat? Well, while their punk affiliation is very loose (first lp was on Alternative Tentacles), they're a solid World Beat-conscious combo worth mentioning. The lineup for this album introduces two female singers, who add a touch of soul, as well as drummer Brian (ex-Limbomaniacs) and many of the Komotion regular guest musicians. The theme running through this CD is the state of the world/state of self, superimposed on an image of global displacement. A good blend of party band and social conscience, the Looters don't play the corporate game and couldn't give a shit if you think they're just SF PC cheeseballs, 'cause they know the score. What could be more punk than that? - George Chen

LOVE CHILD

Witchcraft, CD

Homestead

This is solid guitar pop. Rebecca Odes' singing is light but never insignificant, reminiscent of Juliana Hatfield. She and Alan Licht, whose voice is much less appealing, write strong vocal melodies and harmony arrangements, with hooks and hard riffs. The corners are often rounded with thick guitar. Grows on you, except for the nine-minute, to-be-avoided noise of "The Rose Is A Thorn." I guess they're really inspired by Yo La Tengo. Drop "Rose" and Licht's voice straining through the rockers and you'd have a good record. - Mark W.

LUNACHICKS

Binge & Purge, CD

Safehouse, Box 349, W Lebanon, NH 03784

Howard Stern and I have waited years for this! I can't begin to tell you how much this band has improved. Fans in NYC probably got to see the evolution first hand, but for the rest of us, this is traumatic.

Forget you ever heard "Babysitter On Acid." Start fresh. Lunachicks are finally here! I knew they had it in 'em. Fast, fun punk rock with all the sarcastic lyrics you can handle. The musicianship is top notch, with Theo delivering below the belt kicks with her dynamic voice. If you were expecting L7 Jr., guess again. Binge and purge, and do it again & again. - Frank P.

TOM LYLE

Sanctuary, CD

Skyclad

X-Government Issue guitarist makes hard New Order/Ministry type album. It's some pretty raw stuff with a Nine Inch Nails mentality, yet it still sounds punk. - Dave Urbano

MAGNAPOP

Magnapop, CD

Caroline

Some of the bass stuff here is as noisy and adventurous as Spiral Jetty, but the poppee singing doesn't always groove with the three chord monty except on the last two tracks, which are good. This is the band's demos on CD, very, eh, ambitious for the Caroline label considering they just put out L.A.'s Wax. - Dave U.

MAJORITY OF ONE

Setting The Pace, CD

Cargo

This is a compilation of three EP's from '88, '90, and '91, as

well as their Think About Tomorrow lp from 1989. I think this is supposed to be straightedge, but I can't really tell, what with the absence of telltale X's and shaved heads on the band members. A fast-paced hardcore fest nonetheless, which I'm assuming would be choice for slam dancing. If you're a fan and can't find some of their older EP's, definitely check this out. - Danny A.

MELVINS

Lysol, EP

Boner

I know that my editor isn't too fond of the Melvins, but I love 'em. They're everything that heavy metal was supposed to be - HEAVY. We're talking twenty megatons here. Most metal bands nowadays think that speed is the key, but the Melvins know that you take a monster riff and sloooow it down, it becomes even more menacing. The bass vibrates your insides and boy does it feel good. This is all programmed on one track for your convenience (or annoyance, choose one) with no songs titles anywhere, and it's a menacing CD before your laser even hits the disc. The 15+ minute opening piece is all rumbling guitars and sparse drums that lull you into a false sense of security. This might not be for everyone, but for those of us who can't get it too heavy, the Melvins are the kings of the ten-ton chord. - Jodi S.

MIGHTY FORCE

Hynovel, CD

Sub Bass/Relativity

This effort from Mighty Force, being one of the best acid house mind-slam bands that I've heard all year, had me craving an ecstatic state - which was not fully achieved before review. But nonetheless, I could tell that I'd be workin' out all night on these 12 danceteria brain busters. The instrumentals are the ones to be honored, as vocalist Rob Fielding doesn't stand alone in voice or style. Squish Happy Mondays and Consolidated together and presto! - Greg M.



The
Jersey Beat
T-Shirt

Only \$5 ppd

Two sided,
Xtra-Large
100% Cotton
and so cool,

your friends
will hate you.

Cash or m.o. to
Jim Testa
Jersey Beat
418 Gregory Ave
Weehawken NJ
07087

MILK

Tantrum, CD

Link, 121 W 27 St #401, New York NY 10001

Milk were shot into the universe through the ragged arsehole of Tinitus, the hermaphrodite God of Sound... I think. Since 1990, this trio of coarse young men have been showing the public what Black Sabbath would have sounded like had they had Big Black as an influence. Do not mistake this English Milk for that American Milk from Minneapolis, for that would be a sour mistake (Ooooooh!). Milk rocks hard & heavy, a relentless bludgeoning of Andrew Carnegie's corpse. Swallow Milk and grow strong. - Greg M.

MOMMYHEADS

Coming Into Beauty, CD

Simple Machines

A CD on Simple Machines? It's finally here and more than worthy of the honor. The Mommyheads have been around for some time now, constructing some of the most gorgeous and ear-pleasing symphonic melodies ever to grace my hummer stereo. The Mommyheads prove quite adept at creating their very own signature groove without straying too far from the pop underground sound, much in the vein of renowned hipsters Beat Happening and the Vaselines, minus the typical guitar/bass combo. Instead, they replace the six-string guitar with a homemade instrument they call the "space guitar," which undoubtedly contributes greatly to their unique sound. The mathematical specifications of the patented space guitar are actually described by the band members on the CD! This was a CD only release, which is really for the best since music this astounding should only be heard under the best of circumstances. - Danny A.

MONKS OF DOOM

Forgery, CD

I.R.S.

Ah, I was excited to learn of this ex-Camper Van Beethoven band since Cracker did its best not to impress me. Actually, it poked at me with very large sticks, spat, and pissed me off. There's a bit more substance to the Monks Of Doom but still not enough to pull them out of the ranks of "Post Husker Du College Rock." At least MOD take the nobility... Sorry, Campers, I think your fifteen minutes is up. -- Greg M.

MUDHONEY

Piece Of Cake

Reprise

I'm speechless! Mudhoney have successfully put together another great release - and on Warner Bros. sister label, Reprise, yet! I was prepared for an overproduced grunge-rock contradiction. However, nothing seems to have changed with this release. The 17 songs here range from typical kickass tunes ("No End In Sight," "Explosion," "Suck You Dry") to slower, less characteristic songs like "Take Me There," "Living Wreck," and most of all, "Acetone." Piece Of Cake stands out as proof of Mudhoney's ability to make kickass music with real kickass variety, including using banjos, harmonicas, and marimbas. And even on Reprise, they spent under \$1000 to record this thing. This album literally hasn't left my CD player or Walkman for two weeks. - Alex Swain

NATION OF ULYSSES

Plays Pretty For Baby, CD

Dischord

The only train on a one-way trip out of Squaresville. The hypnotizing wall of the sound of jazz to come. With a greased dome and a ragged suit reminiscent of a rumble with the squares, the mobsters of Ulysses never stop. The screaming trumpet, the swing that won't quit. These are the boys of the revolution soon to come, the sugar-coated dream of the children with soul, the swing always a fuzzy scream in their minds. The children of Ulysses are an organized lot; with self-appointed positions within the Embassy, each member equally participates in the articulation of the vision, the unification of the young, and the eventual

overthrow of today's unsung dictators, the old and "mature."

Beware, all those in a position of assume power, for with microphone in hand and a wall of sound to confuse, the Nation Of Ulysses will prevail. -- Danny AElldridge

NED'S ATOMIC DUSTBIN

Are You Normal?, CD

Columbia

The Neds' second lp doesn't have quite the punkrock energy or frantic pace of their first record, and it's a bit weaker in the hit singles department - no "Kill Your Television" here. But the band's cleaned up the mix a bit so you can actually hear there's two bass guitars going at the same time now, and some of the lyrics (and the melodies that carry them along) are worth a listen, especially the delicious wordplay in "Spring" and the hummable "Not Sleeping Around." - Jim T.

NIGHTBLOOMS

Nightblooms, LP

Seed Records

Like quite a few English bands these days, the Nightblooms utilize the stark contrast between a fragile, harmonized female vocal and grating, grinding distortion-pedal guitars to catch your attention. Nothing here is quite as dissonant or arresting as, say, My Bloody Valentine, but it's a little less soporific than Lush. I kept imagining this was Juliana Hatfield singing along with Sonic Youth, which, when you think about it, might be kind of cool. - Jim T.

THE OOGIES

Feedback Is An Act of God, CD

ECB/Caroline, PO Box 1981, Lancaster PA 17603

Last year's New Route magazine CD winners, the Oogies have been on the forefront of the midwestern PA music scene for a few years now. Hailing from Lancaster, PA, this band may be suffering from "Locationitis," meaning if the Oogies dwelled in the sewers of Chicago or New York, they might very well be as big as, say, the Melvins, Tar, or Surgery. This band is a stripped down, bare boned, brain-crushing, grungy feedback-laced hammer just waiting for you to piss them off. This 10-song CD contains mostly slow-tempo grinders, with nice upbeat Iggy-influenced cuts like "Social Outcast" added for dementia and a drugged-out, tape-look Buttholes-type song, "Into The Fire." But I must say the nicest surprise was hearing how well this was recorded and produced (at Catbox Studios in Lancaster.) If a band like the Oogies can put out a CD this good, why can't Amphetamine Reptile? Buy this. - Frank P.

THE ORIGINAL SINS

Out There, CD

Psonik

It's hard to believe that it's been a couple of years since the Original Sins split from Bar/None and they're still releasing their own albums, while every unlistenable weirdass dork band from the Melvins to Ween is getting signed to the majors. Go figure. Well, except for a few scary moments on the opening cut (an awful punk-rock thing that sounds like a Billy Idol outtake), the Original Sins just keep bashing out primo garage rock, full of stomping rhythms and hooks. Highpoints include J.T.'s love ballad to "Sally Kirkland," and an incandescent cover of Tommy Roe's shlocky "Dizzy." - Jim T.

PAPER TULIPS

Orbital, CD

Flipside, PO Box 60890, Pasadena CA 91116

Initially echoing harder Violent Femmes with a cow punk rockishness, Orbital reminds me of the 80's. How scary is that? Yet when they're more earthy, they can sound like old Throwing Muses. It's a keeper, because the lyrics keep my attention and the sometimes-Velvet Underground-sounding guitars are cool. Long album, like a sweat nap. - Dave U.

PAVEMENT

Watery, Domestic, CD-5
Matador

In the best of all possible worlds, this is what Lou Reed's solo albums would sound like. In this one, no band is being as hotly pursued by the major labels as Pavement, even though these mugs have about as much ambition as Beetle Bailey. - Jim T.

PEGLEGASUS

Bacon, Lettuce, & Tornado, CD
Angry Neighbor, PO Box 66462, Houston TX 77266

Houston, Texas should be proud. By 1999, an annual Peglegasus Day in Houston might be in order. This first full CD is a true gem. The 16 songs of fun, heartfelt, dynamic tunes like "Thermal Underwear," "Moth Man" and "Crabtree Telethon" burn imprints in your mind like the finest Minutemen and Talking Heads. Heck, Mike Watt even plays bass on one song here. The songwriting holds a unique identity in which main vocalist John Vorkamp croons in his instantly identifiable voice, taking us through stories of food and aliens. The world of music needs Peglegasus. I hope Houston is treating them well. This is in my Top Ten of '92. - Frank P.

PIGFACE

Fook, CD
Invisible, PO Box 16008, Chicago IL 60616

1992's ugliest cover, hands down, beats all those gross Earache covers. You must see it. It was so ugly, I taped the CD and traded it in so I wouldn't have to look at it. An industrial supergroup, this incarnation of Pigface centers around drummer Martin Atkins, with Chris Connelly, Andrew Weiss, Chris Haskett, Ogre, Paul Raven, Billy Tucker and 11 other notable industrial and underground personalities. Album number three is their best, with some really interesting ditties, and real songs this time, not just ideas. Its best point - it sounds nothing like Nine Inch Nails or Ministry. Get it if the dark side is your better half. - Frank P.

PLAY TRAINS

Waiting For Edward, CD
PO Box 446, Westfield NJ 07091

Debut release by this 5-piece band. It's a tad short at 35 minutes and rather a strange release. I didn't like it at all the first couple of plays, but the more I listened, the more I liked it. AT about play #12, I still ain't desperately in love with it and I might never play it again after I get this written. How so ever, it's really good, gentle pop with sufficient country and jazz inflections to keep it interesting. I would think this would go over great on college radio. - Rodney L.

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

Killing In The Name, CD
Epic

Three years ago, I would have said "Hell yes!" The attempt is there at Rollins-ish scringing (screaming/singing), which I like. Yet the metal guitar and Chuck D-styled rapping is old and trite, fulfilling some stenciled variation on the old Anthrax/Death Angel sound. How ironic. And the Sweet Lizard Illtet do this kind of thing better anyway. - Dave U.

RAILROAD JERK, Raise The Plow (CD) Matador

JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION, self-titled (CD) Caroline

Both these records appeal to me because they take the blues and literally deconstruct them into something new. Raise The Plow comes a little closer to Railroad Jerk's live show (but it's no substitute), although with their multiple personnel changes, the music has suffered a bit. The loss of Chris is apparent, because the guitar has lots of nervous, jerky edge. The drums are better though, and that makes up for it. My favorite song is "Call Me The Son," with its clever wordplay and underlying blanket of noise.

Jon Spencer must love Elvis, because he sings like him sometimes and acts like him when he's on stage. The three-piece



Southern Culture On The Skids

Explosion play stripped down blues, like RRJ, but a lot rawer and sloppier. It's the primal stuff like "Support-A-Man" and "Chicken Walk" that make me wanna drink some Everclear. - Jodi S.

RATS OF UNUSUAL SIZE

Id, Ego, Superego & Burns Ltd., CD
Skreamin' Skull

Spending an hour with the Rats' CD is like spending an entire afternoon watching Looney Tunes. You might not be laughing out loud every single minute, but odds are you'll be amused more often than not, and you'll probably spit a gut every time that dumb Coyote falls off another cliff. - Jim T.

ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT

Circa: Now, CD
Headhunter/Cargo

Hey, I saw Seaweed on MTV and one of them had a RFTC t-shirt on! What more proof do you need? First, the CD is designed to look EXACTLY like the "Pac Man Fever" 45 from those glorious 80's, complete with a big hole. (The band has also had a single on Sub Pop.) A word to all you hipsters, this band is about as "Flavor Of The Month" and "Next Big Thing" as it gets, so get this so you can say that you "knew 'em when" after they get signed to Geffen. - Danny A. (Sorry, Danny, they got signed to Interscope, for a million and a half bucks, along with Drive Like Jehu, with whom they share a guitarist. Sheesh! - Editor)

ROYAL TRUX

Royal Trux, CD

Drag City, PO Box 476867, Chicago IL 60647

Longtime fans of Royal Trux probably won't like this. Keep in mind that this opinion is coming from someone who doesn't know jackshit about Royal Trux. In fact, I had to call up friends to get any info on them at all, and it just so happens that this is what they told me. So why's this band suddenly turned into a sourball in the mouths of longtime followers? It has to do with "less noise" and "more blues." If that formula has any relevance in your life, you'll be able to make the right choice, I'm sure. Me? I kinda like it. - Mike L.

SAND RUBIES

Sand Rubies, CD

Atlas/Polygram

More post-R.E.M. twang-rock with a clean Rickenbacker guitar sound and well-heeled vocals full of infectious enthusiasm. This is one of those debut records from a band no one's ever heard of that makes you feel good all over just listening to how much these guys enjoy what they're doing. Like most major label CD's, though, this one goes on a bit too long, and by the last few songs all that freshfaced peppiness starts to sound like cheesey U2 outtakes, complete with disposable forays into country-western and folk. - Jim T.

SCREAMING TREES

Sweet Oblivion, CD

Epic

Sitting in my living room in South Carolina with Tree's guitarist Gary Lee Connor previewing this release last year, I told him I thought singer Mark Lanegan may have been listening to too many old Doors records. Connor laughed and said I wasn't too far off, but actually it was too many Leonard Cohen records. There is no missing a heavy brooding in Lanegan's vocals; as the lp unfolds, we can see that Mark sleeps with many private demons and knows them all by name. Backed with the thick raving psychedelia of the mammoth Connors brothers on bass and guitar, Lanegan's laments take on a life of their own, defining the Trees as peerless in a world where most bands have forgotten that honesty and emotion are as important as grungy guitars and beer. The production here is also far superior to any previous Trees release (it was produced by Shimmydisc pothead Don Fleming, and everyone thought they'd get Butch Vig, ha ha!) I could go on and on about this, like the standout cuts "Dollar Bill," "No One Knows," and "Butterfly," all of which make life worth living. Get very drunk, buy yourself a can of Skoal, sit in the dark, and put your CD player on Repeat... ahhhhh - sweet oblivion! - Johnny P.

SEBADOH

Smash Your Head On The Punk Rock, CD

Sub-Pop

The 4th full-length journey into the thoroughly deranged minds of Lou, Jason and Eric. This differs from their Homestead lp's by sticking mainly to a full bass, drums, and guitar sound, rather than the old acoustic and tape deck formula. Despite how often they're mentioned in Sassy, I doubt these guys will ever get too popular because their music is simply too fucked up for the mainstream "alternative" culture. Then again, Ween is on Elektra now, so any predictions on my part are irrelevant. - Mike L.

THE SHIT

The Shit, lp

Vermin Scum

Smartass punk lp that's well played and produced, but just didn't interest me very much. - Des Jr.

SISTER PSYCHIC

Fuel, CD

Restless

Sister is a relative thang. If you go for a singer who sounds like Mudhoney's Mark Lanegan and inflects like Green Day's Billie Joe, droney guitars and listenable tuneage, this will sit well. If it all sounds reminiscent of something else but implacably so, it might wear on your nerves. I enjoyed the first half of this CD before I felt caught in some college radio time loop. This is good in small doses, but might be better sandwiched between meatier fare (like, say, Screaming Trees and Green Day.) - George C.

SKATENIGS

Stupid People Shouldn't Breed, CD

Megaforce

This starts off with a cool spoken-word intro, then doses you with bland funky rap metal. Honestly, nothing sticks out here, just some mundane novelty rock. Good for a tax writeoff, I'm sure. - Greg M.

SKAW

Sympathy Love, CD single

Warner Bros.

This doesn't sound like most of the "alternative" music coming out of the UK right now, but sure enough, it fits right in with that good old U.S. of A. monotony. It includes an annoying song in which an adult impersonates a child, something which always drives me nuts. Also included is a hidden song on the end of the disc which isn't listed, but it's the best song here, a show-stopping savior of a cover of John Denver's "Thank God I'm A Country Boy." It's worth the price of admission by itself. - Danny A.

S.O.D.

Live At Budokan, CD

Megaforce

They're back - at least for a reunion show or two - recorded live in New Yarrk, definitely breaking no new ground, and probably not to be taken too seriously. Hard-hitting, heavy moshorama metal, this CD features a lot of songs from the Speak English Or Die lp from 1987. Plus some sloppy covers like "Stigmata," "Thieves," and "Territorial Piesings." The disc leaps and bounds above the last Nuclear Assault effort and is better than any M.O.D., but isn't quite as good as Anthrax. (S.O.D. is composed of members of those three bands.) I think it's great for four ol' pals to get back together for a show, and you can tell from listening to this that they sure had fun, but I'm not sure it's worth the price of a CD to the average fan. My suggestion: If you liked "Speak English..." or the bands these guys are cheating on, borrow this from a friend or find it used. - Frank P.

SOUL ASYLUM

Grave Dancers Union, CD

CBS

Even when they soften up, Soul Asylum are still the most brutal softies in the land. Grave Dancer's Union, however, is decidedly not a wimpy buy-in. The weakest track on this album is "Sun Maid," but even Dave Pirner's weak schitt blows 90% of everyone else's "quality" out of the water. With the brilliant single "Somebody To Shove" (and the tight-fisted guidance of a monster record label more supportive than their last), Soul Asylum seem bound for glory in that creative abyss known as the mainstream. But with songs like "Homesick," "Without A Trace," and "Black Gold," even AOR status can't degrade this solid and affirming work. "Keep on dockin' in the Marineworld." - George C.

SOUL HAT

Outdebox, CD

Spindletop, PO Box 684744, Austin TX 78768

These guys have some good stuff to offer, with a wide variety of styles. I'd have to compare their music to a weird hybrid of Black Crowes, Pearl Jam, and some funky island rhythms. This Austin band hits some high points on this disc, most notably the ballads, which go off in an Uncle Tupelo-ish direction. - Jamie T.

SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS

For Lovers Only,
Safe House

"Daddy Was A Preacher But Mama Was A Go Go Girl" is a song I remember vividly from this band's 1991 SXSW Conference appearance. That night was my first SCOTS experience, but since then I've become a huge fan and follower of their career. For Lovers Only, their new release, is again amazing southern-fried hick-twangin' fun lovin' backwoods music, and I finally own a versin of "Daddy Was A Preacher." But it for yourself, for friends, family and lovers. Let's make this band huge, America. God bless Southern Culture On The Skids. Yee haw. - Frank P.

SWALES

Pleasureland, CD
BarNone

The cover looks like an old skate band but the listener is left to decipher the meaning of a cut like "Shoes Of A Fisherman's Wife." The sound has a surrealistic, dream-inspiring quality with a touch of country-western on "Everybody's Had A Heartache." There's also an emotional testament to commitment on "Always On Your Side." Interesting, but they need something to tie it all together. - Tom B.

SWIRLIES

What To Do About Them, CD
Taang!

The Swirlies hail from Boston. One listen to their EP will tell ya they like My Bloody Valentine a lot. But they also like Dinosaur Jr and Sonic Youth. They sound exactly like none of those bands. What they do sound like is this: you know that feeling you get on a seesaw? When you go up in the air, there's no ground underneath and you feel like you're gonna be stuck up there forever? Then you start coming down and you wish you had stayed up? That feeling, expressed in sound, is an essential part of the Swirlies. It's all in the tremelo arm, I tell ya.

Each song is sonically different, but you can tell they were all recorded by the same band. Most were on earlier singles (like the

hypnotic "Sarah Sitting"); the rest are new. "Her Life Of Artistic Freedom" is sort of like DinoJr's "Poledo" - white-noise loops and tape manipulations galore. This is a record that gets played three times a day (at least) where I live, which is very good indeed. Catch 'em live too, if you can. - Jodi S.

THAT'S IT

Really, CD
BYO, PO Box 67A64, Los Angeles CA 90067

Seemingly hard and bland quarter-note parts b/w vocals that sound like a Jersey shore cover band. - Dave U.

THOUSAND YARD STARE

Hands On, CD
Polydor

One of my favorite new British bands, Thousand Yard Stare can crank up their effects boxes with the best of the shoegazers, but the music they make owes more to the alternative rock so beloved of fans in Minneapolis and Athens -- catchy choruses, big bouncy riffs, brisk tempos, and lots of energy. There's nothing terribly new going on here, but it's rock and roll that brightens my mood every time I hear it. - Jim T.

THUD

Life And Death, CD
Fifth Column, 915 F St NW, Wash DC 20004

In one word, HEAVY. Thud is D.C.'s Helmet, Prong, Biohazard, and Quicksand all rolled into one, an uncompromising band that looks through urban eyes with hostile and violent scars etched in their brains. Thud means business, and business is good. Not for the fragile. Highly recommended. - Frank P.

TICKS

Sun Shinin' On Your Rain, CD
Medium Cool/TwinTone

Low-tone distortion, simple guitar rock. Kinda like Loose from New Brunswick. The vocals melodies sound like Joe Perry when Aerosmith was cool, gone pop fishing. Except for the last track, which pulls off something on the V.U. side. - Dave U.



PHOTO BY MICHELE TAYLOR

SOUL ASYLUM

THELONIUS MONSTER

Beautiful Mess, CD
Capitol

Bob Forrest's monster rears its beautifully confused head again, the band's first recording in four long years. So I dug up the band's earlier records, Stormy Weather and Next Saturday Afternoon; they were good, but not great. But the song "Sammy Hagar Weekend" had become an anthem for me in college, around the time I saw them play Temple University with Fishbone and the Chili Peppers. I always felt sorry for them. I saw the band again in the summer of '89, when Bob had cut all his hair off. I felt sorry again. Drunk rock star. Almost.

So I was ready to pity poor Bob again, except Beautiful Mess is a wonderful CD. It's a GREAT CD. Finally. Bob's stories of life are a refreshing change of pace from the same old bash and bitch records. Sure, Bob is miserable, but he's looking at the bright spots. Some of the Monster's friends like Tom Waits and Soul Asylum lend a hand here too. It's nice to know Bob Forrest & Co. are gonna be okay. Capitol Records gave them a second chance at life in the major leagues, and I think it's the least we could all do is listen to what they have to say. This Beautiful Mess is a beautiful record. - Frank P.

TUMBLEWEED

Weedseed, CD
Seed Records/Atlantic

I'm a sucker for this guitar sound - wah/fuzz/feedback and hard riffin'. Lenny and Paul, as the liner notes (right next to the cheeseey 'shroom art) call 'em, write nice melancholy hooks, use hard riffs and all that squall in the service of tight songs, and bust nice solos. Rithie Leewillow has a strong and flexible voice. Drummer Steve (one name again) plays with loose, rolling momentum. But these guys drop drippy cliches too often ("Why don't they just get stoned?" or "Let's get together this time/let's play together, mankind"). Monster Magnet is Tumbleweed's evil and way better cousin. - Mark W.

UZEDA

Out Of Colours, CD
First Warning

Sort of a poppy rock band, some songs with a harder edge, none of which really breaks any new ground. The female singer sounds a bit like Joan Jett on some songs. - Danny A.

VENISON

Six Points Of Light, CD
Big Money/Twintone, 2541 Nicollet Ave So, Minneapolis MN 55404
Venison is not a glamor band. They rock like Bullet Lavalta but preach like an Epitaph band, undermining the granite that holds this band together. Thick production and short, concise punk songs filter any preconceptions from their name. One up, one down. - Dave U.

VOICE IN TIME

All Around Us, CD-5
Zero Hour, PO Box 1434, Summit NJ 07902

It's bad enough that Voice In Time is the most vapid, boring, hackneyed, uninteresting band in NJ. But just to show you how life really sucks, they have enough money not only to release their own CD's, but also to hire an independent publicist to mail them out. - Jim T.

VOODOO GEARSHIFT

Glue Goat, CD
C/Z

Ultra-tight, riff-heavy hard rock with lots of twists and turns. Only problem is that there are a few dozen other bands doing the same thing, and I can't imagine Voodoo Gearshift being anyone's first choice. Still, if you insist that your dose of flannel-rock be on an indie label, you couldn't do much better. - Sal C.

WAX

What Else Can We Do, CD
Caroline

Wax are the 90's Clash with a touch of Chicago's Rights Of The Accused - upbeat, love-influenced snotty punk rock with outstanding harmonies. Watch it, guys, look what happened to Birdland. This CD is fun, naive, and promising. It even contains the first song they ever wrote together, "Hold On." - Frank P.

WEEN

Pure Guava, CD
Elektra

I'm not sure what they're smoking over at Elektra, but I want some. Ween's major label debut (sheesh, just writing that gives me the willies) comes from the same batch of homemade 4-track recordings that gave us The Pod on Shimmydisc last year. These new tracks are a little less weird and modestly more listenable, although not nearly as inspired as the God Ween Satan lp on Twintone (of course, they had six years to write the songs on that one.) There are a couple of tracks on Pure Guava that would make my Ween party tape -- "Pumpin' 4 The Man," a tale of Mickey's years as a gasjockey in New Hope, PA, is hilarious, and "Don't Get 2 Close (2 My Fantasy)" is as close as to an arena rock anthem as they two little mopes are ever going to get. I still can't, in good conscience, recommend this to anyone but the already committed Ween fan, though. - Jim T.

WOOL

Budspawn, CD
External/Polydor

Sounds like angry rock 'n roll to me. I'm not sure if this really classifies as "alternative," but then again I can't really say that's what they were aiming for, being this is their shot at major label superstardom. - Danny A.

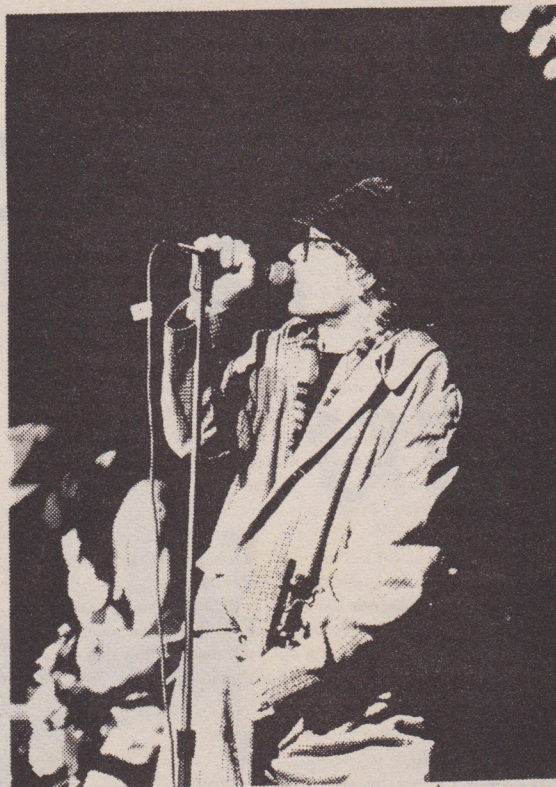


Photo by Greg Leomporra

Thelonus Monster

For the uninformed, this is Pete and Franz Stahl, who spent about ten years in a megacool punk band called Scream with very little to show for it. (One of their many drummers was a guy named Dave Grohl, who left to join this Seattle band you may have heard of.) Anyway, here's Pete and Franz with a new rhythm section finally grabbing for the gold ring, only now instead of a megacool punk band they mostly sound like bad 70's arena rock. Except for "Medication," which has that special Scream something that puts it into a class by itself. - Jim T.

YOUNG FRESH FELLOWS

Doc Sharpie Is A Bad Man, CD
Frontier

Quirky, melodic mature rock with one cliché lyric after another. It's not the music I remember as fresh. This band seems to be going after the Yuppie Whig crowd. Yet they're MTV bound, since this retains its energy in a good way. - Dave U.

COMPILATIONS

CRUSH-A BOSTON COMPILATION, CD

Cherrydisc, 15 Elmwood St, Newton MA 02158

Some overly slick bands make up the majority of this comp, but it still has some standout cuts by Sidewalk Gallery, Heretix, the Fritz, and Naked Age, and four good points: Good Point #1 - All the bands are different; some are poppy, some are chunky, some are heavy, some suck, but most don't. Good Point #2 - It's refreshing to see projects like this that document the less visible bands from a big scene like Boston. Good Point #3 - Before this disc, I'd never heard of any of these bands. Good Point #4 - Now I have. - Mike L.

MANHATTAN ON THE ROCKS

Pow Wow, 1776 Broadway, New York NY 10019

This is a novel idea, a compilation of "cutting edge" New York bands. But seriously, it isn't half bad, with an extra tip o' the proverbial hat going out to Emergency Broadcast System and Lysdexic, two cyber-era techno type bands. (You might have seen EBN's video collage of George Bush singing "We Will Rock You" from U2's Zoo TV tour.) Lysdexic samples an Eplady commercial in "Hair Removal System." The False Prophets are here as well, with a very punk song about cops. There are also a few bands with a much more obvious rock edge (Stigmata A Go Go, Ism, Rat At Rat R) and the variety is refreshing. I've heard better, but if you're itchin' to check out the new New York scene, it couldn't hurt to give this a listen. - Danny A.

MARIJUANA'S GREATEST HITS REVISITED, CD

Re-Hash, PO Box 23855, Nashville TN 37202

This opens with a bong hit, and bangs your head into "Sweet Leaf" by some band called Storm Orphans. The Fabulous Freak Brothers are suucking a bong on the cover, truly showing THC knowledge and the pot ideology. Murphy's Law does a Cab Calloway cover, "Reefer Man," sounding like an acoustic ska band. I even got a free rolling paper. In all, a well-granola'd package, complete with country and reggae bands doing their favorite pot songs. One up. - Dave U.

PUDDLE STOMP: Portland Independent Music Compilation, CD

Puddlestomp, PO Box 5562, Portland OR 97228

This compilation represents a wide variety of Portland alternative sounds, but while all the bands are talented, the music seems a little tired. If not one band stands out on a compilation this varied, you know the content is questionable. - Jamie T.

BOOKS

Stabl Stabl Stabl by Ben Weasel

Oyster Publications, 1015 E 49, Austin TX 78751

This second chapbook by the lead singer of Screeching Weasel is basically a journal, incorporating a tour diary and some random thoughts from one of punk rock's leading stinkers...I mean,



WOOL

PHOTO BY SHAWN SCALLEN

thinkers. If you enjoy Ben's column in Maximum Rock N Roll, you'll get a few chuckles out of this, although the material in this book tends to be more reflective and probably won't piss off nearly as many people as the author would like. - Jim T.

The World Of Zines

By Mike Gunderloy and Carl Goldberg Janice
Penguin Books

The editors of Factsheet 5, the fanzine about fanzines and one of the most exhaustive, important, and dearly missed publications in the history of the alternative press, have put together a booklong collection of fanzine reviews (some of them a little dated), along with some of the information they gleaned in the years they were publishing FF5. The history of fanzine publishing is interesting enough, but the important part of this book is the Resource Guide at the end, which guides the would-be fanzine editor with helpful hints about finding a printer, postal regulations, screening photos, desktop publishing, and all the other details you need to know. The 400 fanzine reviews are fun, and if you never saw Factsheet 5, they'll give you an idea of what you missed. And now when I get one of those annoying letters from some kid who wants to know how to start a fanzine, I can (politely) tell him where to go (for the information, that is.) - Jim T.

VIDEOS

AMAUROSIS - A film by Ethan Minsker

East Coast Exchange Productions, 184 Lexington Ave # 7B, New York NY 10016

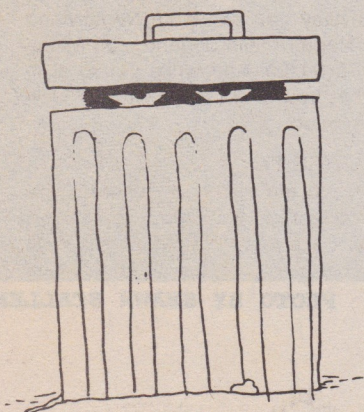
Ethan Minsker is best known as the editor of East Coast Exchange fanzine, a supporter of the D.C. hardcore scene, and a video artists who's made cool, low-budget videos for bands like Desiderata and Worlds Collide. Here (in what I assume was some sort of film school project), he's made a dramatic film (shot on 16mm and transferred to video) about a young woman whose life is drastically changed when she learns she's caught a venereal disease. It reminds me a bit of Woody Allen's Ingmar Bergmanesque films (like Interiors) -- moody, sullen, obsessive, and altogether different from the director's better-known work. - Jim T.

OUT OF FOCUS VIDEO FANZINE #2 (\$8)

% Bob Byrne, 1326 Fredrick Lane, Naperville IL 60565

The second Out Of Focus videozine, like the first, documents the great DIY punk scene going on at McGregor's, a punk club in Elmhurst IL (about a half hour outside Chicago) booked by the indefatigable Matt Nelson (one of punk rock's true unsung heroes by the way.) Anyway, the bands this time are Moral Crux, All You Can Eat, Econochrist, Monsula, and Chicago's own 8-Bark and Sludgeworth. Each band plays a couple of songs and hangs around for a short interview. There are some short funny home-movie bits in-between the bands as well. Punk as fuck and lots of fun, especially if you live someplace where there's no place for cool bands like this to play. - Jim T.

REJECTED BY "SESAME STREET"

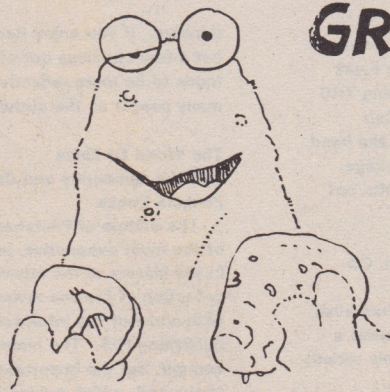


**OSCAR
THE
COMBUSTIBLE
GUN-
TOTING
PSYCHOTIC**



**SOCK
BOY**

**PORK
MONSTER**



GROOVER



Doug Fiering

LATE ARRIVALS

BELLY *Star*, CD (Sire) Tanya Donelly played second banana to Kristin Hersh in Throwing Muses through her formative years, so I guess you can excuse the pouting, whining, and angst-ridden tone of some of these songs. The rest sound like she's auditioning to replace Natalie Whatser-name once she leaves 10,000 Maniacs for her impending solo career. And yet a few of these tunes actually do kick serious butt, because the rhythm section did time in Verbal Assault, one of the best hardcore bands of the 80's. Thought you'd like to know that. - Jim T.

BLACK 47 5 Song EP (SBK/EMI) The only thing I have against the Irish is their music. I used to have an Irish roommate who would play the same fucking Pogues tape every day at an unreal volume. Do you know what that can do to a person? Black 47 are a bit more tolerable, thank goodness, upbeat rock with heavily accented vocals, keyboards, and some cool uilleann pipes. Produced by Ric Ocasek (remember him?) As Jim Testa once said, Irish music is to music what Irish cooking is to food. - Greg Matherly

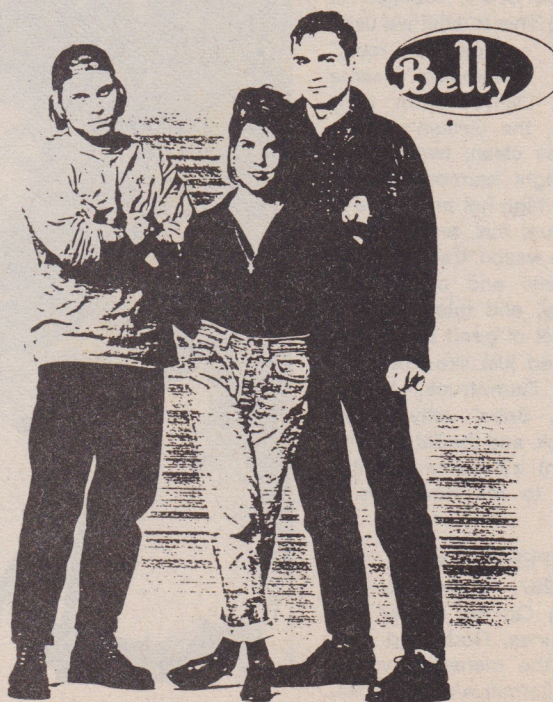
EMERGENCY BROADCAST NETWORK *Behavior Modification* EP (TVT) Those of you who saw EBN's Chevy Impala with booming stereo sound and eight color monitors at Lollapalooza '91 or witnessed the unauthorized Presidential cover of Queen's "We Will Rock You" on U2's Zoo TV tour already know of this monster media menace that invades and distorts the dark sectors of your brainwashed cult. EBN combine video collage of news, speeches, and various other clips with a heavy rave/techno assault, all done in fine, choreographed fashion. They've been described as "like watching CNN on acid heavily laced with speed." Got me? Good. Now you see why this disc couldn't do them justice, since you're only getting a third of the whole picture. I hope EBN was just using U2 instead of the other way around because I think it'd be totally hypocritical of U2 to utilize EBN's infiltration into media hype as part of their totally sampled Zoo TV extravaganza, and then turn around and sue Negativland over something as petty as reproducing their cover art. - Greg M.

J. *we ARE the MAJORITY*, CD (A&M) J. is an East German, quite likely the first German rapper you've ever heard of. But his Euro hip hop owes at least as much to Prince's funky party music of the late 80's as it does to any rapper, which might not make hardcore rap fans happy but gives the rest of us plenty of sweet funky grooves to dig. The lyrics are another matter, since J. is also anti-fascist and speaks out against some of the excesses (racism, xenophobia, and ethnic violence) that "democracy" has wrought in East Germany since the fall of Communism there. Reportedly, J. also flirts with sexual ambiguity (again, ala' Prince) although A&M seems to have toned down that side of his persona for this American release. - Jim T.

NEGATIVLAND *Guns*, EP (SST) Well, here it is, boys & girls. What's left of their U2 album after all the court hearings and legal crap. Guns contains just two tracks, "Then" (8:05) and "Now" (8:36), which are old-fashioned

and modern gun samples and advertisements put to a drum machine and different mood music which capture the groups negativhumor well. Still, without the illegal U2 songs, it's a far cry from such negativclassics as Helter Stupid and A Big 10-8 Place. Let me fill you in on the background: Everyone's favorite pompous Irish assholes, U2, yanked the rug out from under a truly eccentric performance group. Negativland have been pumping out sampled conspiratorial information and spliced craziness for over 15 years now and they had just gained immense popularity within the underground and were getting comfortable financially, when U-know-who goes apeshit because Negativland sampled a few songs off Joshua Tree. This began a long legal war that almost wiped out Negativland (and damaged their relations with SST as well). So it turns out that U2, for all their humanitarian hype and their millions, turn out to be a bunch of big-headed fucks with no sense of art or humor. Anyway you can write Negativland and offer your support at Negativmailorderland, 109 Minna St #391, San Francisco CA 94105. And while you're at it, write U2 and tell them what you think: U2, Box 806, New York NY 10028. No other solution. - Greg M.

TELEVISION PERSONALITIES *Closer To God*, CD (Seed) You'd think that somewhere in the course of recording 19 songs, somebody - the producer, an engineer, the cleaning woman, *somebody* - would have pointed out that this is all pointless drivel. The only nice thing I can say about this disc is that it's guaranteed not to overexcite you. - Jim T.



CASSETTES

23 SKIDOO "dehumidified" (419 W Orange St, Lancaster PA 17603) This group, which hails from the same neck of the woods as Ocean Blue and Live, plays twangy country-pop. But it's funny, Ocean Blue and Live err in being a little too sincere and soulful for their own good, so they come off sounding pretentious. 23 Skidoo has great chops, both guitars and vocals, and if they invested a little of that soul in their own music, they'd be compared to the Byrds and Burrito Brothers of the Gram Parsons era. But Gram Parsons didn't play frat houses, and he didn't try to make his songs more commercial with catchy choruses and slick little riffs. - Jim T.

ALICE DONUT "The Untidy Suicides Of Your Degenerate Children" (Alternative Tentacles) Alice Donut already covered the topic of teen suicide (and brilliantly, I might add) on their first album's high point, the outrageously caustic and wonderfully zippy "New Jersey Exit." But there's only so much mileage you can milk out of bands built around a joke (in this case, Tom Antona's Jello Biafra-On-Prozac vocals), and there really isn't anything all that funny about quirky speedmetal anyway. Oh, and how's this for punk: "For the 36-page booklet that accompanies this Alice Donut release, please send \$2 to Alternative Tentacles." If the booklet "accompanies" the release, shouldn't it come WITH the release? - Jim T.

DISSONANCE "Demo" (448 Berkshire Dr, Ventnor NJ 08406) There's no actual dissonance on this demo, just chugga chugga speedmetal. It sounds like they pulled the reins in a bit in the studio, a common problem with young bands, so let's be generous and assume this breathes a little more life when they play it live.

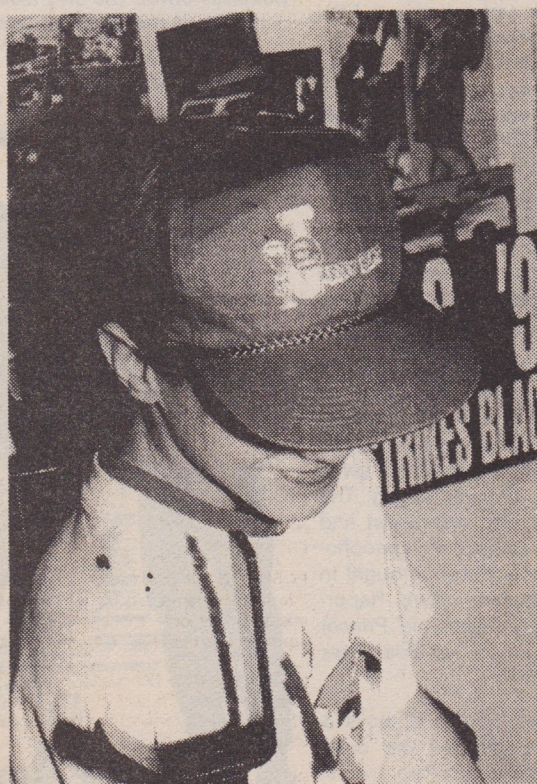
THE GEFKENS "Rabbit Punch" (P.O.S. Records, 105 10th St #1, Hoboken NJ 07030) This is what we used to call "college radio rock," before "alternative" came along. Derived from early R.E.M., the Gefken's music features clean, twangy guitars, tight harmony vocals, lots of high hat and snare in the drum mix, and sincerity up the wazoo. It's bright and energetic and catchy and friendly, and there used to be a lot of good bands that sounded just like this (Lifeboat, Dumptruck, Winter Hours, Spiral Jetty, Three O'Clock, and the list goes on and on). It just sounds a little dated to me nowadays. - Jim T.

GODSPEED "Demo" (PO Box 267, Island Hts NJ 08732) On the slower, dirgier tunes, Godspeed captures the menacing vocals and alternative/metal cross-

over punch of bands like Alice In Chains and Soundgarden. But when they pick up the tempo, the band's roots in the South Jersey "ShoreCore" scene take over, and you get crunchy hardcore, Old School style, with solid, gutsy vocals. The band doesn't get up north much, but friends from the Camden/Philly area tell me they rule live. - Jim T.

SWINGSET "Demo" (PO Box 166, Green Village NJ 07935) I usually bitch about demos going on too long, but this 3-song sampler is way too short! Swingset now features Bill and Dennis from the Blisters on guitar and drums, Hut on vocals and Candy on bass. Where the Blisters drew from the Ramones and Replacements' poppy punk, Swingset derives its sound from Fugazi's tortured rhythms and the pain-driven angst of post-hardcore grunge, putting them in the same category as bands like Greyhouse and Jawbox. Whatever you call it, I like it, and want to hear more. - Jim T.

TWELVE:01 "Another Day In The Life Of Me" (44 Maple Ave, Trenton NJ 08618) Here's another band whose inspiration obviously comes from R.E.M.'s early records, but in Twelve:01's case, the results are surprisingly fresh and modern. Erik Simonsen's slightly nasal, sincere vocals manage to be distinct and original, and his lyrics express the pangs of post-adolescent love traumas with the panache of classic pop music. The band combines acoustic and electric guitars for a very bright sound, but producer James Mastro smartly leaves off the reverb, avoiding the dreaded "twangy" tag. What you've got here is a charismatic, personable young singer and songwriter, with a talented and well-schooled band behind him, and I wouldn't be at all surprised to find their next release coming on an advance cassette from some major label. - Jim t.



The
Jersey Beat
Baseball
Cap

Only \$5

One size fits
most heads

Bright red with
our "Like, Y'Know?"
logo in white

Cash or m.o. to
Jim Testa
418 Gregory Ave
Weehawken NJ 07087

PUBLISHERS CHOICE - Half-size Zines

BAKERS DOZEN #4 (849C Almar Ave #154, Santa Cruz CA 95060 \$2) I like the layouts and graphics, there's interviews and fiction and stuff, but the unique thing here are the one-page band ads, which run throughout the zine.

BLAH BLAH BLAH #3 (PO Box 7044, Hollywood FL 33081 \$2) Not just a punkzine, it's like a trip to the 5 & 10. Mine came with 3 condoms, a little plastic toy, PETA flyers, & stickers. This issue features a long rebuttal from Jordan of Revelation Records about some of the shit that's been said about his label.

CLOUDBREAK #2 (Eric, 834 W Deerfield, Springfield MO 65807 \$1) Lots of great photos, in-yr-face layouts and all the usuals.

Diseased Pariah News #6 (Men's Support Ctr, PO Box 30564, Oakland CA 94604 \$3) Like a lot of queer zines, this one has sexy photos, true-life stories, comics, and interviews, the big difference here being that (as the title implies) all the contributors are HIV+ or have AIDS. I won't degrade their efforts by saying how brave they are to do this; I'm sure for them, doing a zine is the same as for anybody else, just a fun way to pass the time. I guess the difference is that some of us have less time than others.

EXPLOITATION RESPECT (PO Box 1155, Haddonfield NJ 08003 \$1) Most people who do half-size zines choose that format because they don't want to put in the work that finishing an 8 1/2x11 inch zine entails, but this little sucker is beautiful, packed with text, graphics, and gorgeous layouts, and quality interviews.

QUANTRO #3 (1994 Gentle Breeze Rd, Middleburg FL 32068 \$2) A chilling first-person narrative by the editor about getting thrown out of her parents house and going homeless for several months until finally settling down again in Florida. Somehow through all that she managed to interview some bands, write some stories, and get this zine out. Amazing. This issue's Broccoli God is Crispin Glover.

SECOND GUESS #5 (PO Box 9382, Reno NV 89507 \$1) By the same wiseass who does Riot Boy zine (the male reply to Riot Grrls), Second Gues isn't as smart-alecky, although there's still attitude aplenty, along with a lot of good photos and a diary-like narrative that runs thru the zine (with a lot of travel stories.)

MORE HALF SIZE ZINES: Look, I've been working on finishing this issue every night and all weekend for the past four weeks. I'm out of time, out of energy, and out of room, so I can't review every single zine that's come in the mail or that I bought. I'd like to, but I can't. These half-size zines have personal observations, reviews, editorials, photos, art, poetry, and reviews in some combination, and all are worth your attention or I wouldn't include them.

ARROW OF TRUTH,, 33 Naomi Ave, Landisville PA 17538 2 stamps

BABY SUE, PO Box 1111, Decatur GA 30031 \$1

CHANGE ZINE, Patrick West, Trinity College Box 904, Hartford CT 06106

CHEW, PO Box 77008, Ybor City FL 33675 \$1

CONVENIENT LIVING, PO Box 5063, RPO 2203, New Brunswick NJ 08903

ENGINE,, 866 Post #1, San Francisco CA 94109 \$1

FUNCTION, Dawn Williams, 20946 Bryant St #31, Canoga Pk CA 91304 \$1

further too..., 40 Darwin Ct, Barlow St, London SE17 1HR ENGLAND (the editor asks for "a decent trade")

HEADACHE DESCRIBED, M.H., 909 Terrace Pl, Modesto CA 95350 \$1

JAUNDICE, PO Box 1414, Barrington IL 60011 \$1

KID GLOVES, PO Box 46555, St Petersburg FL 33741 \$1

MURTAUGH, Spike, 137 Emerson Pl, Brooklyn NY 11205

NOISY CONCEPT, Mike Thain, 960 Morris Rd #2, Kent OH 44240 \$1

OI BOY!, The Judge, 315 San Leandro Way, San Francisco CA 94127 \$1

PSHAWI, PO Box 2382, Janesville WI 53547 \$1

QUIT WHINING!, Margaret, PO Box 2154, Mt Holyoke College, So Hadley MA 01075 \$1

RINSO, PO Box 3411, Dayton OH 45401 \$1

RADIO RIOT, WRSU, 126 College Ave, New Brunswick NJ 08903 (2 stamps)

RIOT BOY, PO box 9382, Reno NV 89507 (2 stamps)

TEMPORARY CULTURE, PO Box 43072, Upper Montclair NJ 07043 \$2

UNBENT, 1541 Freeport Rd, Natrona Hts PA 15065, \$1

UNDERDOG ZINE, PO Box 14182, Chicago IL 60614 \$2

WIT'S END, PO Box 144, Hallandale FL 33008 \$1

YELLO SUBMARINE, 422 Linden Pl, Elmira NY 14901 \$1

ZINES

PUBLISHER'S CHOICE - Full-size Zines

394 OCONEE #1 (Pattie Kleinke, PO Box 1026, New York NY 10023) \$2 Pattie was one of the first contributors to Jersey Beat, and she and I were both at R.E.M.'s first gig at Maxwells in 1982. Now here she is 10 years later with her own R.E.M. fanzine. Fortunately she's not just some gushing groupie. Her first issue contains some pithy criticism of Automatic For The People (which she disliked,) first-person remembrances, a behind the scenes look at the video shoot for "Drive," and more R.E.M. age.

CHAIRS MISSING (PO Box 522, Stratford CT 06497) \$3 Scott Munroe will always be a force to be reckoned with, as long as he can type and find a xerox machine. Chairs Missing never looks like much but it's always worth reading - in depth interviews and intelligent reviews.

DUB CATCHER (PO Box 4203, Highland Pk NJ 08904) \$2 Very pro looking newspaper-format music paper concentrating on the reggae, dub, and soca scene.

EAST COAST EXCHANGE #4 (Ethan Minsker, 184 Lexington Ave #7B, New York NY 10016) \$2 Great photos and solid interviews with Agnostic Front, Cows, Helmet, Bosstones, and D.C. scenester Chris Thompson.

HOUSE OF PAIN #9 (PO Box 120861, Nashville TN 37212) \$2 Consistently top notch zine on slick paper covering the southern punk scene. Lots of photos, reviews, and interviews with amazing sounding bands you've never heard of.

I HATE BRENDA NEWSLETTER (% Ben Is Dead, PO Box 3166, Hollywood CA 90028) \$1 From those wacky folks at Ben Is Dead, this newsletter is dedicated to everyone who hates Shannon Doherty (Brenda on Beverly Hills 90210). Really funny. My idea is to have a contest and give a prize to anyone who can furnish proof (photo of drivers license, insurance application, high school yearbook photo, etc) showing how old Jason Priestly and Luke Perry really are.

NO LONGER A FANZINE #2 (Joseph Gervasi, 142 Frankford Ave, Blackwood NJ 08012) \$1.50 Travel trips, a cross country tour diary, interviews, rants and raves, comix, a dialogue with some born again Christians, a good example of expanding the boundaries of the generic punk fanzine.

POSITRON #2 (Sean Capone, 1148 N Kedzie, Chicago IL 60651) \$1 I've never been a big fan of the positive-straightedge philosophy, but this zine not only looks great, it's surprisingly open-minded, giving equal time to the likes of Amanda MacKaye and Sam McPheeters.

PEOPLE UNDER NO KING (P.U.N.K.) #4 (Rick Seger, 2163 43rd Ave, San Francisco CA 94116) \$2 The Look magazine of the East Bay scene, this is legal-sized sheets full of photos of cool punk bands, most of them taken at Gilman St.

SLUG & LETTUCE (Christine, PO Box 2067, New York NY 10009) Stamps I am frequently berated for not including S&L in my zine

reviews, but that's only because I think of it more as a newsletter, and besides, Christine usually just hands me one at ABC No Rio and it never winds up on the review stack. But anyway, for the uninitiated, this is a tabloid newspaper with Christine's photos, lots of free classified ads, letters, gossip and news about the NY punk scene, and reviews. It's probably the closest we have to an East Coast Maximum Rock N Roll, and well worth sending away for or picking up when you're in the city.

THWACK! #2 (1640 W Grace St, Richmond VA 23220) \$2 Some stunning photos and a really good selection of bands interviewed - Clutch, Shudder To Think, and Five-Eight - along with reviews.

Full-Size Zines

SHIP OF FOOLS, PO Box 2062, Westminster MD 2115 \$2

SCUM, PO Box 7051, Jupiter FL 33468 \$1

CHAOS INTO POWER, Doug Brunell, 39 Sterling Rd, Mt Pocono PA 18344 \$1

DUMPSTER DIVE #6, 74 Osbourne Ave, Norwalk CT 06855 \$2

SLAM #2, PO Box 22861, Alexandria VA 22304 \$2

FAMOUS HARDCORE OF PUNKLAND, Craig Hill, 220 Standish #1, Redwood City CA 94063 \$2

FOSTER CHILD #12, Tony Miller, 7635 Marcy Ct, Glen Burnie MD 21060 \$2

LOOKOUT #38, PO Box 11374, Berkeley CA 94701 \$2

WHITEBREAD ZINE #9, Brandon Stosuy, RPO 4601, PO Box 5063, New Brunswick NJ 08903 \$1

RAPID FIRE ZINE #8, RD2 Box 3370, Bristol VT 05443 \$2



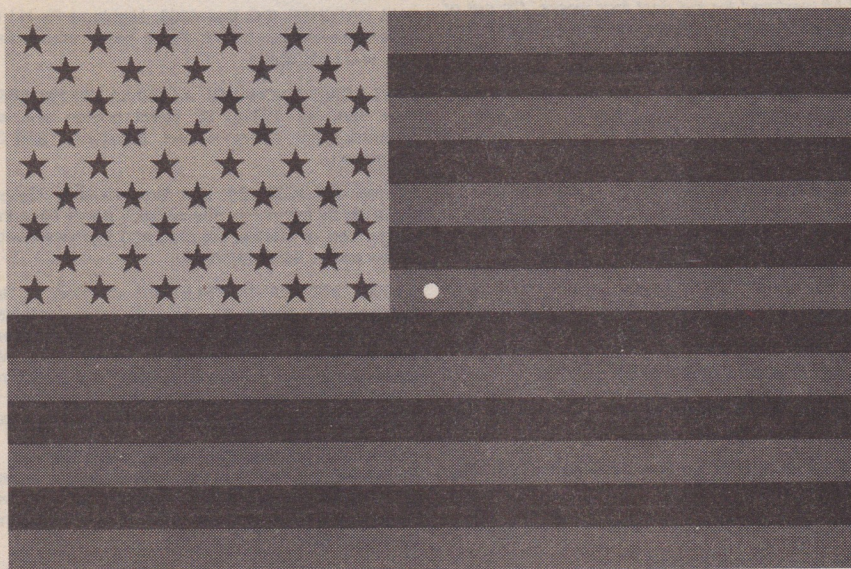
LIVE BEAT #1, 3238 Lenape Dr, Dresher PA 19025 \$2

GENETIC DISORDER #8, PO Box 151362, San Diego CA 92175 \$1

KRAPPIE KANDY and **MISERY**, two issues of **VAR TUFA's** tabloid artzine, for \$2 + stamps, PO Box 1344, Claremont CA 91711

SCRAPE, 8601 SW 40 St #132, Miami FL 33155 \$1

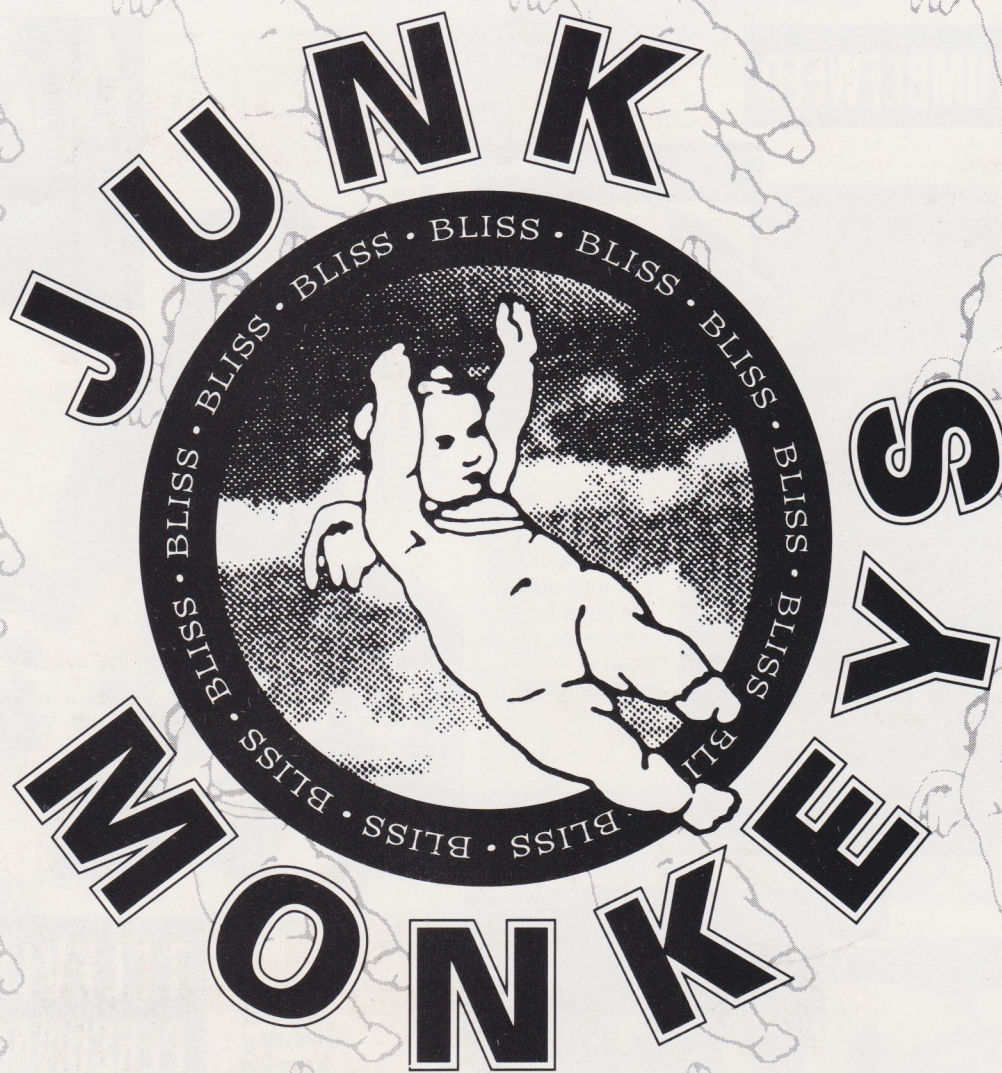
POSTER CHILDREN



TOOL OF THE MAN



©1993 Sire Records Company.



ON TOUR NOW!

"See them live and you'll believe"
- SPIN MAGAZINE

"... this Detroit-based quartet boasts a hard attack that carves a furrow between modern rock and a sure sense of melodicism." - BILLBOARD MAGAZINE

The JUNK MONKEYS new album *BLISS* available now on Metal Blade Modern

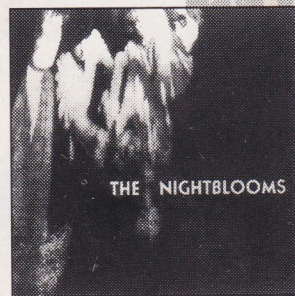
METAL BLADE MODERN, A DIVISION OF METAL BLADE RECORDS INC., MANUFACTURED AND DISTRIBUTED BY WARNER BROS. RECORDS INC.
© 1992 METAL BLADE RECORDS INC.

TUMBLEWEED

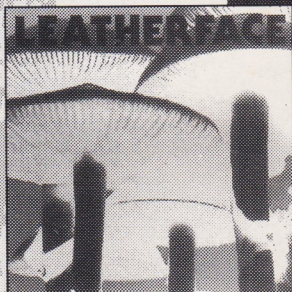
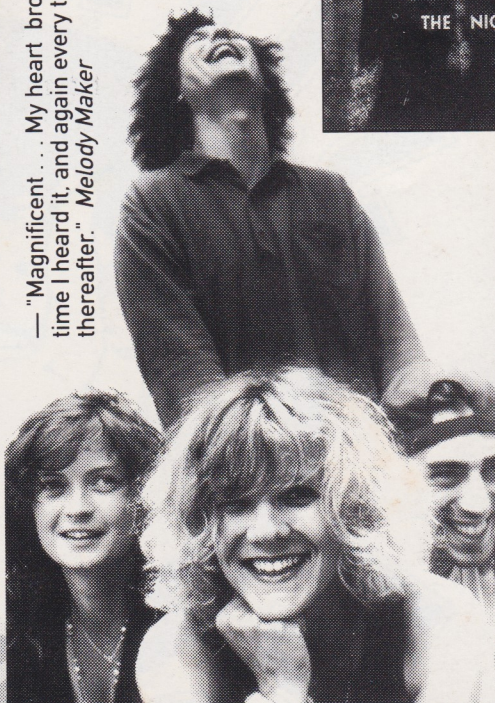


— "Great proof that Australia can kick out the jams for a broader scan of motor-injected rock." *CMJ*

— "Magnificent... My heart broke the first time I heard it, and again every time thereafter." *Melody Maker*



THE NIGHTBLOSSOMS



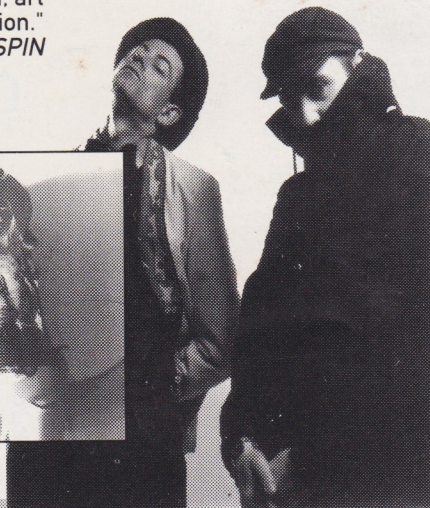
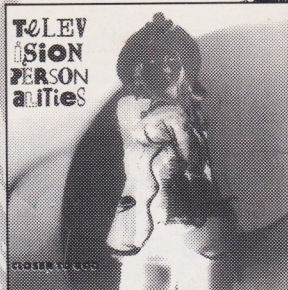
LEATHERFACE

— "Leatherface's pure emotional charge never fails to wow the masses." *NME*



— "... painfully sincere, harrowing, primitive psych-pop songs about love, depression, art and religion." *SPIN*

TELEVISION PERSONALITIES



For more info on fine Seed artists write to SEED RECORDS, 19 W. 21st #501 NY, NY, 10010

SEED